

THE PAXMAN PROBLEM

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KICKING AND SCREAMING AT FEVER PITCH

Lynne Truss
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FROM BIG TOP TO BIG TIME

Valerie Grove meets Rupert Graves
PAGE 19

Labour fails to give parliamentary time for vote on hunting



BY PHILIP WEBSTER AND MICHAEL HORSNELL

THE Labour Party has backed away from its long-standing commitment to give parliamentary time to legislation banning fox-hunting. A compromise reached by party leaders means one of the country's oldest pursuits will be able to continue for some time to come. And the early years of a Blair government would not get bogged down with a sensitive Bill that could divide the party and take up time needed for other measures.

gives no promise on finding parliamentary time. The shift will infuriate animal rights activists but please rural communities. Last night the League Against Cruel Sports warned Labour that, with public feelings against animal cruelty running high, it would be a "bad political move" if the party backed away from its commitment to ban hunting with hounds. Pro-hunting spokesmen welcomed the absence of a specific commitment to make parliamentary time available for legislation, but said the threat to their sport remained.

member's Bill to push it through. Controversial backbench Bills cannot get through Parliament without the support of the Government of the day. Only limited time is allotted to them and they are always vulnerable to delaying tactics. Jack Straw, the Shadow Home Secretary, Lord Irvine of Lairg, Shadow Lord Chancellor, and Robin Cook, Shadow Foreign Secretary and Labour's policy chief, are understood to be the key figures behind the manifesto wording.

Cabinet figures said that they had no desire to embroil Labour in a classic town-versus-country argument. Other sources said there were no votes to be gained in banning hunting, but that rural votes could be lost if one were imposed. The wording went through last week's Shadow Cabinet and national executive meeting, without comment. "No one wanted an eyelid," an informed source said.

off from a commitment they have already made." Peter Stevenson, political and legal director of Compassion in World Farming, said: "I should love to see Labour bring in a ban on hunting with a government Bill and not leave it to a free vote. I am immensely disappointed at the vagueness in the manifesto." But Richard Moore, election team leader of the International Fund for Animal Welfare, said: "We didn't expect a government-sponsored Bill. It's been policy to allow a free vote. We will win that. We see no weakening in Labour's position or resolve."

Party would have been crazy to put a commitment on paper to provide time for legislation given the competition to find time for other more important business if they get elected. But they are still planning to hold a free vote on whether hunting should be banned, and there could still be time for a private member's Bill to get through both houses of Parliament.

Trust me, says Blair as he plays it safe

BY PHILIP WEBSTER, POLITICAL EDITOR

TONY BLAIR set his sights on two terms of office yesterday as he offered Britain a fresh start and invited the country to judge his performance in government severely. Labour would "blow its place in history" if it betrayed the trust of the British people at the general election and afterwards, he said.

Under the banner of 'honesty in politics,' Blair is able to make a virtue of paucity

Matthew Parris, page 7

The problem is not ends. It is means. Labour's figures do not add up

Peter Riddell, page 10

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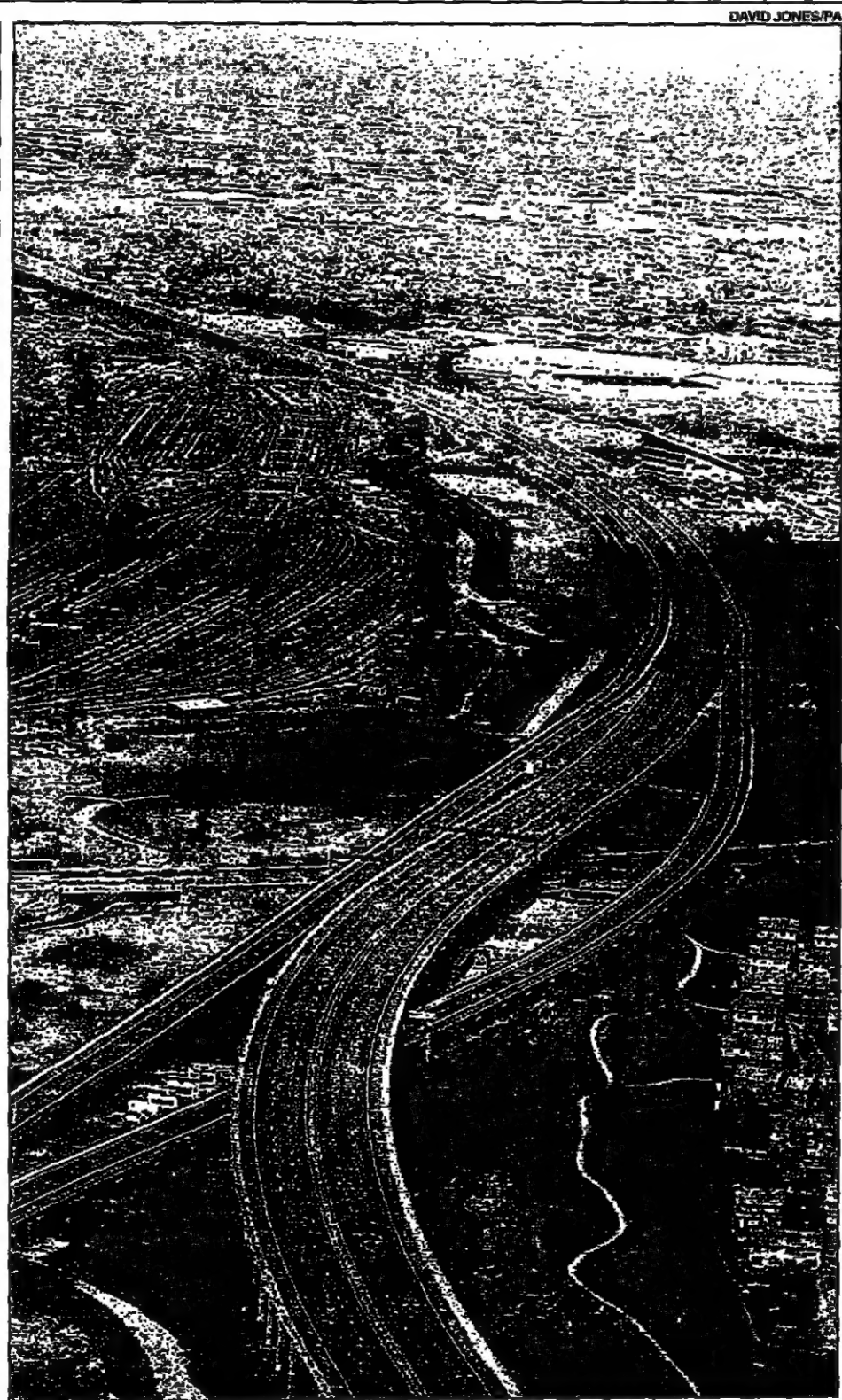
Labour Manifesto in full, Section Two

Mr Blair launched his document as two polls showed that his party was maintaining its huge lead. A Harris poll for *The Independent* gives Labour 52 per cent, the Tories 28 and the Liberal Democrats 14. A Gallup survey for *The Daily Telegraph* also gives Labour 52 per cent, but has the Tories on 31 and the Liberal Democrats on 11.

But Mr Blair's pledge to stick to the Government's spending figures and not raise personal taxes was soon undermined when Gordon Brown admitted there was a £1.5 billion hole in the expenditure plans. The Shadow Chancellor even said that Labour might have to go ahead with the £500 million privatisation of the National Air Traffic System to help to fill the gap.

It also promised a national minimum wage, referendums on a Scottish parliament and a Welsh assembly, a windfall tax on privatised utilities to get 250,000 youngsters into work, extra spending on education to cut class sizes, year-on-year increases in health spending, a referendum on single currency in the event of a Labour government deciding to go in, a reduction in VAT on fuel to 5 per cent, abolition of the voting rights of hereditary peers, and faster justice for young offenders.

John Major described the manifesto as "more a con-trick than a contract", while Michael Heseltine said Labour's document was a contract with the trade unions. Mr Major, campaigning in Scotland, also attacked Mr Blair's devolution plans, claiming that "in a handful of sentences he promises to start the break up of the United Kingdom".



This was the normally crowded junction of the M5 and M6 after the bomb alert

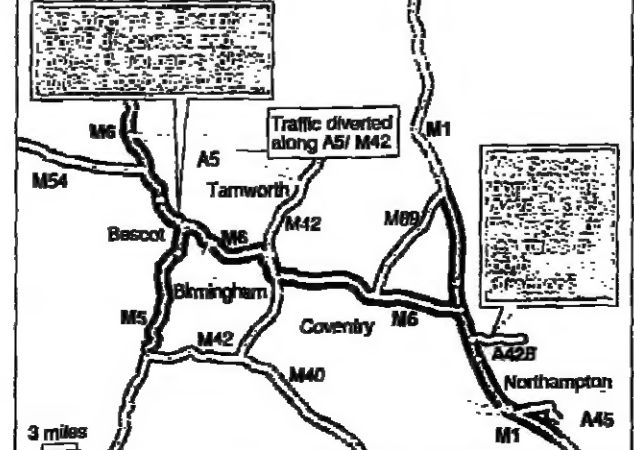
Bomb chaos on motorways

BY STEWART TENDLER, DANNY MCGRODY AND KEVIN EASON

TWO bombs were found under the M6 near Birmingham yesterday as the IRA brought chaos to the busiest section of road in Europe. The bombs were discovered near junction nine after a coded warning that devices had been left between Perry Barr and Walsall. One detonator had been fired, but the bomb had failed to explode.

would explode under the motorway by about 1am. As police scoured the elevated section of the motorway, two small explosions were heard, but no one could trace the source. Then yesterday afternoon West Midlands Police discovered a bomb attached to the top of a 60ft support column near Bescot. Two controlled explosions destroyed the device. The second bomb was found 100 yards away.

In Northamptonshire, the M1 was closed between junctions 16 and 19 for eight hours after a warning of a device under a road bridge. Police found a metal box near the Eurotunnel freight terminal at Crick. It was harmless.



Road rage 'is middle class crime'

BY JEREMY LAURANCE

ROAD rage is a middle class crime, a professor of psychology said last night. Professor John Groeger, of the University of Surrey, said incidents in which drivers attacked each other over minor traffic misdemeanours were more likely to involve the middle classes than any other violent crime.

Research presented to the Edinburgh International Science Festival examined reports of 100 incidents of road rage from 1993, and found they were unlike common crimes of violence. Perpetrators and victims tended to be older than in other crimes and to span the social classes and both sexes.

Describing himself as initially a sceptic about road rage, Professor Groeger said the differences had convinced him it was a unique phenomenon. The first reports of incidents appeared in 1993 and had grown rapidly. "The key question is whether the rage is confined to the road or whether the people involved are just genuinely angry. I am coming to the view that this is something different from other forms of violence." Road rage incidents Continued on page 2, col 6

IN BRIEF

Kohl is to run for fifth term

Helmut Kohl, the German Chancellor, has announced that he intends to stand for re-election after months of speculation that he was suffering from failing health and losing control over the spiralling economic problems that have dogged him for the past year.

BCCI fraud case man found guilty

A shipping tycoon who defrauded the Bank of Credit and Commerce International of £750 million was yesterday convicted of fraud and false accounting, in the biggest case of its kind to come before a British court.

Teachers' threat

Teachers in Bradford may take industrial action after having to take back boys caught with an air pistol. Page 2

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MANIFESTO: THE MAIN POINTS	
□ No rise in basic or top rate of income tax. Long term aim of 10p starting rate.	more patients. Annual above-inflation increase in spending.
□ Windfall tax on privatised utilities, to put 250,000 under-25s into work.	□ Trade Union recognition where majority of "relevant" workforce support it.
□ National minimum wage level to be decided.	□ Referendums on Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly
□ Reduction in class sizes for five to seven-year-olds. Phasing out of Assisted Places Scheme. "Hit squads" to target failing education authorities. No return to 11-plus, but no abolition of grammar schools.	□ Referendum on single currency.
□ Cut in VAT on fuel to 5 per cent.	□ Abolition of voting rights for hereditary peers.
□ End to NHS internal market. £100 million to treat	□ A Royal Commission to report on long-term care of the elderly
	□ Speeding up sentencing for persistent young offenders.
	□ Free vote on a total ban on handguns.

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Tycoon brought down BCCI with £750m fraud

BY JON ASHWORTH

ABBAS GOKAL, the shipping mogul convicted yesterday of stealing \$1.2 billion (£750 million) from customers of the Bank of Credit and Commerce International, spent the money on a life of Rolls-Royces, private jets and exotic holidays.

Victims of the fraud ranged from the Sheikh of Abu Dhabi, who lost about £312 million, to Western Isles council in Scotland (£24 million), Westminster City Council (£3.5 million) and Harlow council in Essex (£4.5 million). Council tax bills will be higher and council services reduced as a result until well into the next century.

Gokal's personal fortune is thought to exceed £20 million. The son of wealthy Pakistani traders, he was educated at the exclusive St Patrick's High School in Karachi and was a regular visitor to Britain, where the bank had its headquarters.

He had a home in Ealing, West London, and in Geneva, plus a chalet in the ski resort of Megève. His two sons and two daughters are thought to have attended expensive schools in Switzerland.

Gokal, 61, and his family ran up credit card bills totalling £245,000 from 1987 to 1992. Since his arrest three years ago, he had been on remand at Brixton prison, where he will remain until he is sentenced at the Old Bailey next month.

His was the fifth successive conviction from the Serious Fraud Office investigation into BCCI, which collapsed in 1991 with debts of \$10 billion. About 38,000 British creditors were affected. The Gokal case, led by Chris Dickson, a senior SFO lawyer, involved the biggest sum in a British fraud indictment.

Gulf Group was the biggest single borrower from BCCI. The Geneva-based company had borrowed so much money



Gokal: attempted to escape in Pakistan



Gokal's wife: the family kept three houses

from the bank that one could not survive without the other. Working with BCCI's senior executives, Gokal created a network of offshore companies to carry funds back to his own pocket by a circuitous route. Millions of dollars went round in an exercise likened by SFO investigators to a "giant washing machine". The money was laundered through banks in New York.

The SFO found documents signed by Gokal in a London safe deposit box which showed that he and his brothers, Mustafa and Murtaza, owned and controlled the companies involved in the fraud. Secretaries and other junior Gulf Group employees were nominee directors of the phony companies, and were required to sign thousands of documents

designed to throw BCCI's auditor, Price Waterhouse, off the scent.

The documents were produced in the special duties department at BCCI's headquarters in Leadenhall Street in the City of London. This was a whole unit dedicated to fabricating documents about Gulf Group, including inventing commercial histories for the non-existent businesses and false loan agreements.

Gokal fled from Geneva for Pakistan in 1992, shortly before police raided his offices. In July 1994 he was invited to America to give evidence under an immunity-from-prosecution deal agreed with the American authorities, but the SFO was tipped off and the police were waiting when his flight landed at Frankfurt to refuse.

He had been declared bankrupt by this stage, but nevertheless flew first class under an assumed name. He was arrested and extradited to Britain. After repeated delays, the trial opened at the Old Bailey in September 1996.

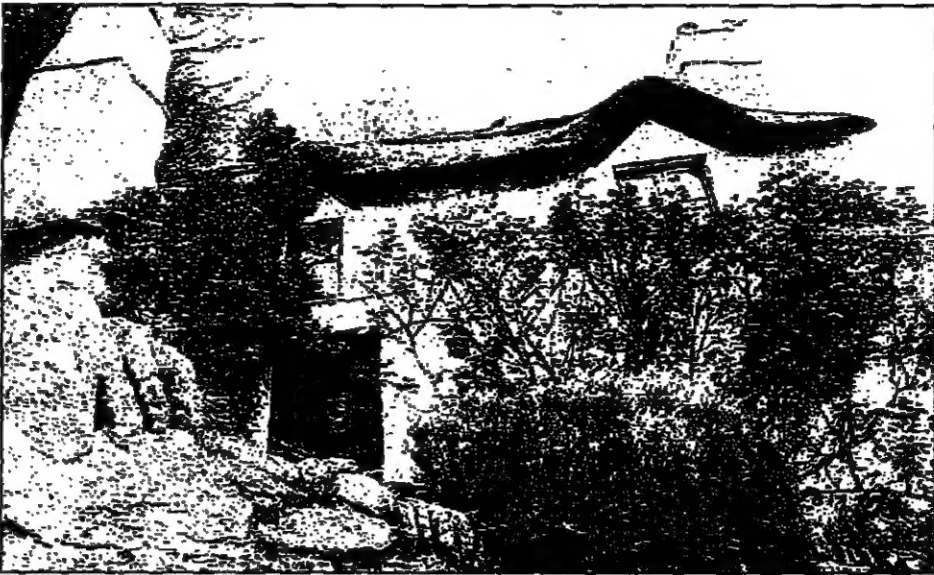
The main loser in the BCCI affair is undoubtedly the Sheikh of Abu Dhabi, who deposited more than £1.625 billion with BCCI over a ten-year period. He thought the money was being invested in safe government instruments. Between 1983 and 1989, more than £12 million of his money was siphoned off to Gulf Group. Only about £102 million has been recovered.

Many small businesses and private individuals also lost money, including a Londoner who was saving for a bone marrow transplant for his adopted son.

Gokal, who had denied fraud and false accounting, will be sentenced at the Old Bailey next month and faces confiscation of some of his assets. He received legal aid for the 122-day trial, estimated to have cost a total of £10 million. He may be made to contribute to his defence bill.



Amy Prideaux at Shelley's Cottage where, she claims, the poet honeymooned



The other Shelley's cottage, at the Rising Sun Hotel, admits it may have rivals

Clash of chapter and verse over Shelley's abode

BY ALAN HAMILTON

TWO rival Devon hoteliers are locked in dispute over which of their inns played host to Percy Shelley and his teenage bride Harriet Westbrook on their honeymoon in 1812. Both the Rising Sun and Shelley's Cottage Hotel in the village of Lynmouth are claiming that the pale romantic poet, then only 20 years old, began his brief marriage to the 16-year-old Harriet in their rooms.

Both, it appears, are entirely wrong: Shelley honeymooned 600 miles away, in Edinburgh.

The dispute, which has simmered for years, has resurfaced because of the Rising Sun's inclusion in the latest edition of the Great Inns of England guidebook, and its subsequent advertising in national newspapers, playing on the Shelley connection. Amy Prideaux, proprietor of the rival Shelley's Cottage, insisted yesterday that hers was the true location.

Hugo Jeune, proprietor of the Rising Sun, said yesterday he did not want to comment on what he regarded as an old row. But he said he had never claimed to have any documentary evidence that his hotel was the Shelley's love nest, and had never denied that there were two possible claimants to the title.

The truth of the matter, according to all the standard biographies of the poet, is that Shelley ran away to Edin-



The only Percy Bysshe Shelley, romantic poet

burgh and married Harriet there on August 28, 1811, remaining in the city for some time before journeying with their friend Thomas Jefferson Hogg — who wasted no time in making a pass at the new Mrs Shelley — to York. Ten months later the Shelleys arrived in Lynmouth.

Roderick Cavaliero of the Keats-Shelley Memorial Association yesterday burrowed into the poet's own letters to discover Shelley's description of his Devon home. "The poverty and humbleness of the apartments is compensated by their number, and we can invite our friends with a consciousness that there is enclosed space wherein they may sleep."

Whichever is the correct cottage, it did the Shelleys no good. Within two years Percy ran off to Switzerland with Mary Godwin, and Devon never saw him again.

To the ends of the earth and the top of the world. Only two of us have made it.

On May 9th 1994, Erling Kagge conquered Everest and became the first man to achieve the impossible.

He'd made it to the North Pole with no outside help. He'd made it to the South Pole totally alone. And he'd climbed Everest at his first attempt.

He was accompanied on all three expeditions by one watch. His Rolex.

"The reason I've succeeded is not because I've been fitter than anyone else but because I've been very thorough with my preparations.

"I studied the equipment that the local inhabitants use.

"I looked at high tech and low tech. Then, eventually, by drawing on everyone's



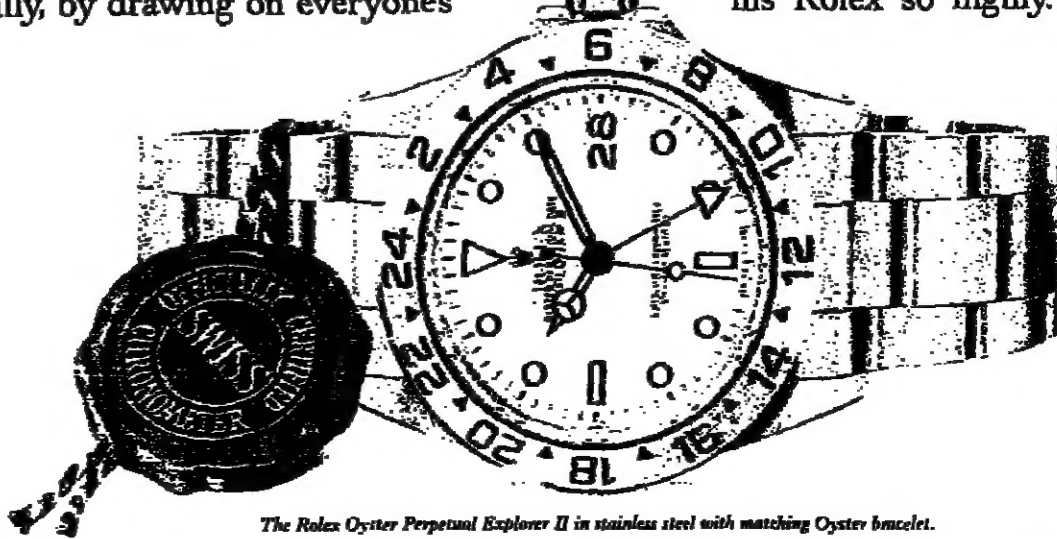
experience, I chose the equipment I knew I could trust."

So not surprisingly, Erling Kagge chose a Rolex Explorer II. "I knew instinctively that it was the right watch," he says. "It's built to withstand almost anything. It's the only thing that's been on all the trips with me and it's never once let me down."

Strength and reliability are qualities that Erling Kagge values above all others.

"I never trust to luck," he says. "But the fact is, the better your equipment the luckier you get."

Maybe that's why he values his Rolex so highly.



The Rolex Oyster Perpetual Explorer II in stainless steel with matching Oyster bracelet.

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Reward to catch New Year killer

BY DANIEL MCGRORY

THE parents of a murdered schoolgirl are hoping that a £23,000 reward will tempt someone to stop shielding her killer. Detectives are still baffled after three months of inquiries.

Nicola Dixon, 17, was sexually attacked and bludgeoned to death on her way to a New Year's Eve party in Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands. Police received 1,500 calls from the public but none has led to the murderer. Local business men and community leaders have now helped to raise the reward money.

Rita Dixon, 46, said yesterday: "Someone must be shielding the murderer. We can not rest until the killer is arrested and in prison. Nicola deserves justice. We do not want the murderer to strike again and inflict hell on another family."

Detective Chief Inspector Kelvin Roberts said: "I find it hard to believe that somebody doesn't know, or have a suspi-

cion, that their friend, neighbour, partner or husband is responsible for Nicola's death."

Police have begun DNA tests on more than 100 local youths. There is concern that the killer must be local, and women are reluctant to walk alone after dark through backstreets.

The killer struck in the grounds of a house, vacated just three days earlier, alongside a dimly lit alleyway. Walburga Burrell, whose flat is 50 yards from the entrance to the alleyway, said: "Women won't walk there at night now as the man must have picked the one place around here where he knew he could not be seen."

The victim was in her last year at school studying for A levels and worked as a volunteer with children's groups as part of her Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme.

A man about 5ft 5in, in his early 20s, in a dark overcoat and Doc Marten's boots, was seen a few yards behind Nicola as she slithered on snow-covered roads on the way to a pub to meet friends. Police do not know whether she had been stalked.

Mr Crouch said: "Someone is shielding whoever did it, and perhaps money might tempt them to betray him. More than 1,500 calls from the public is unprecedented."

Nicola's father, Andy Dixon, added: "It's frustrating: there has been a magnificent response and yet it hasn't brought a result."



Nicola Dixon: she was killed in alleyway

Drunk trio jailed over flight delay

BY EMMA WILKINS

THREE drunken passengers who caused a pilot to abort a flight seconds before take-off were each jailed for six months yesterday.

The men were escorted from the Air 2000 flight bound for Crete after hurling abuse at each other and insulting stewardesses at Manchester airport last July. The other 231 passengers cheered as they were removed.

Manchester Crown Court was told that Edward Lunden, Philip Vincent and Ian Lewis were among a group of nine friends travelling together. But they were so drunk that they needed help to walk up the aircraft steps to their seats. Michael Murray, for the prosecution, said:

"They were warned by the cabin crew five times as the aircraft made its way towards the runway, until the pilot decided that it was not safe to take off with them on board and returned to the terminal where the three were arrested."

Lunden, 23, Vincent, 20, and Lewis, 22, all from Liverpool, admitted drunkenness on an aircraft, but they looked shocked when Judge Blackburn jailed them and ordered them to pay the airline £450 each as compensation for the delay they caused.

The judge said: "This is not ordinary drunkenness — disgusting as it is — this is drunkenness on an aeroplane carrying a large number of passengers, where discipline is important. This sort of behaviour will not be tolerated for safety reasons."

Laird fires poaching broadside

BY SHIRLEY ENGLISH

A HIGHLAND laird has accused residents of Fort William of being "idle deer poachers" cashing in on the demand for venison created by the BSE crisis.

Michael Wigan, who owns the 23,000-acre Borrobol estate in east Sutherland, says that poaching has become big business for some Highlanders, as venison is increasingly seen as a safe alternative to beef. He writes in the April edition of the hunting and shooting magazine *The Field*: "Fort William houses many theoretically idle men sur-

rounded by deer country. Lochaber is a notorious poaching ground... most Highland deer poachers are local men with poaching in their blood."

His remarks provoked an angry response from Ian MacDonald, who represents Fort William on Highland Council. Trading insults, he said: "This man obviously has a totally jaundiced outlook on life. I know locals in the town are annoyed by these statements, but my advice is to laugh it off. Gnat bites do not hurt anyone. Let this idiot have his say."

Mr Wigan wrote that some

young people had turned their backs on mainstream careers in favour of the lucrative, tax-free income available from poaching. "Game dealers were paying estates £1.40 a pound in autumn 1996. This means a good stag in prime condition in September would fetch £200. Five stags a week is £1,000. No tax is paid and there are no costs."

Mr Wigan, who regularly writes about the Highlands, is an Englishman who inherited the Borrobol estate at Helmsdale and lives on the farm all year. It was bought by his family in 1938 for £32,000.

Advert campaign prescribes cannabis

By ALEXANDRA FREAN
MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

AN ADVERTISING campaign promoting the therapeutic use of cannabis for arthritis and multiple sclerosis is to be launched this weekend. It argues that laws banning medicinal use are contradictory, as GPs are allowed to prescribe substitutes for other drugs such as heroin.

One advertisement shows a cannabis leaf in a pestle and mortar, and has the slogan: "I can't prescribe you a safe, naturally occurring herb for the pain of MS. But I can give you heroin."

Cannabis was available on prescription until 1971. The new move has been organised by Clare Hodges, an MS sufferer who runs the Alliance for Cannabis Therapeutics. She told the advertising magazine *Campaign*: "We are not campaigning for the general legalisation of cannabis. We want people to understand it is a valuable medicine and we are campaigning to have it made available from doctors."

"I am running this campaign from my back room. I hope it will take things on to a new level."

Sharon Gallacher, an advertising executive who created the advertisements without charge, said: "I read an article about Clare Hodges and contacted her to see if there was anything I could do to help. The idea is to raise people's consciousness. Most people are afraid if you tell them that you can get heroin on prescription, but not cannabis."

The alliance has been hoping that newspapers might agree to print the advertisements without charge. Yesterday the *Economist* magazine said it would be delighted to carry the advertisements, although it would be reluctant to run them free.

Alan Dunachie, advertising manager for the *Economist*, said: "It would be difficult for a publication which has already written several times about bringing cannabis within the law not to run these advertisements."

Eurotunnel safety promise fails to curb blaze fears

By KATHRYN KNIGHT

EUROTUNNEL agreed yesterday to introduce new safety procedures after admitting that there had been "avoidable delays" in tackling the Channel Tunnel fire last November. But the company said it would not change the open lattice-work wagons which some believe caused a "blowtorch" effect in the tunnel.

The Fire Brigades Union accused executives of complacency after they confirmed that more of the wagons were to be ordered at a cost of £130 million. The Consumers' Association urged lorry drivers to think twice before they used the freight service. "The evidence produced by Eurotunnel doesn't address the question of the lattice-sided wagons at all. There are more questions than answers," a spokesman said.

Eurotunnel hopes that its new measures, including smokehoods for crew and passengers, will allow freight services to resume by mid-June. The Channel Tunnel Safety Authority said, however, that it wanted more information and that it was impossible to predict when

permission would be given for trains to start.

Thirty people needed hospital treatment after being trapped in a smoke-filled compartment when the fire broke out 12 miles from the French coast. Fifteen lorries and the rear locomotive of the shuttle were destroyed, as was 600 metres of tunnel.

The cause of the blaze is still being investigated by the French authorities, although in its report yesterday Eurotunnel ruled out a system or mechanical failure. Investigations have centred on multiple failures of the tunnel safety systems, including the ventilation system, and an apparent one-hour delay in summoning Kent Fire Brigade.

Robert Malpas, co-chairman of Eurotunnel, conceded yesterday that more could have been done to help the passengers to escape more quickly. "We have, of course, learnt lessons from this incident and have already implemented a number of important changes in procedures, equipment, manning levels and training to improve further the protection of pas-

sengers, employees and the tunnel itself," he said.

Mr Malpas defended the decision to place a £130 million order for more lattice design wagons within 18 months. "I do not believe there is any need to modify the design of the wagons," he said. "We are in discussions with the safety authority."

Mike Fordham, assistant general secretary of the Fire Brigades Union, said Eurotunnel's refusal to change the wagons was complacency at its worst. "There will be another fire down the tunnel — that's a certainty. Fires will always occur. We believe that if it does occur, life will be lost. The public should not travel down there until it is as safe as it can possibly be," he said.

The tighter safety measures announced yesterday include more fire suppression systems in the tunnel, more checks on each lorry as it is loaded, and electronic devices to show more precisely where a train has stopped.

All freight shuttles will be fitted with smokehoods before the service resumes. The smokehoods, which were being tested yesterday by Kent Fire Brigade, will be kept in the amenity coach of the freight shuttles and distributed by the *chef de train*.

A spokesman for the Channel Tunnel Safety Authority said its report on the fire would be released after the election. "We are considering Eurotunnel's submissions at the moment. We have asked them already to complete a number of measures as a pre-condition to restarting the shuttle service."

The fire has so far cost about £75 million in lost revenue. The car service has been restricted by the tunnel repairs. The cost to the company will be about £10 million with the rest covered by insurers. Total claims on insurers, including repair costs, are likely to be nearly £200 million.



Jeremy Irons arriving for yesterday's inquest. His vehicle overturned in the crash

Irons tells of fight to avoid crash that killed driver of 79

By TIM JONES

THE actor Jeremy Irons described yesterday how he tried to avoid an oncoming car before a crash on an Oxfordshire country road that resulted in the death of a 79-year-old driver.

Richard Belgrave, of Thame, Oxfordshire, suffered multiple injuries and died in hospital a month after the accident last September. Mr Irons, 48, told the inquest that, as he rounded a bend near Tetworth, his four-wheel-drive vehicle, he saw Mr Belgrave's car straddling the white line. "The car was moving further

over towards me into my line and I swerved to avoid it," he said.

"I pulled on to the verge but not far enough, because there was an impact. At that point I closed my eyes and when I opened them again I found my Jeep was on its side."

Mr Irons, who won a best-actor Oscar for his role in *Reversal of Fortune*, lives in Watlington and said he was familiar with the road. He had noticed the offside wheels of Mr Belgrave's car were under pressure as it negotiated the bend. The driver's wife, Doris, 83, who was a passen-

ger, said that she remembered nothing of the accident.

Sergeant Frank Yatesley of Thames Valley Police said that, if Mr Irons had not been driving a left-hand-drive vehicle, he would have been seriously injured. There was no evidence that either driver had been going too fast.

Nicholas Gardiner, the Oxfordshire Coroner, recorded a verdict of accidental death.

Five days before the accident, Mr Irons's wife, Sinead Cusack, and their two sons escaped injury when their horsebox overturned on the M4 in South Wales.

The way to a woman's heart is through your wallet

By JEREMY LAURANCE

MEN advertising for partners in newspapers want a physically attractive woman, while women want a solvent, independent man, a study of lonely-hearts columns shows.

The findings of the study of 2,000 lonely-hearts advertisements which appeared in 20 local and two national newspapers, including *The Times*, provide useful tips on how to get the most replies.

Analysis of the advertisements, presented at the British Psychological Society's annual conference in Edinburgh, showed that men tended to offer wealth, professional status and property, and to seek attractive women with warmth and sensitivity, traditionally seen as feminine qualities. Women tended to emphasise their attractiveness but, above all, what they wanted in a man was solvency.

Many men also claimed to offer warmth, love and care — and did so more than the women. Mark Mason, of Nene College, Northampton, who conducted the study, said it was impossible to tell whether these were genuinely meant, or a cynical ploy designed to entrap unwary women.

"It is possible men are changing and becoming 'new men' who are less shy about advertising these qualities," he said. "Or it may be that they know this is what women

want and are offering it as a way of gaining more replies."

Mr Mason said earlier studies had shown that advertisers who offered stereotypical qualities got more replies. "Heterosexual females look for rich men — wage-earners with their own home and car. They offer attractiveness a lot and heterosexual males seek it a lot."

Few advertisers departed from convention. The commonest adjective used was genuine, closely followed by humorous, attractive, caring and loving. Only two advertisements in a thousand included adjectives such as fat, unattractive, cynical and eccentric.

Mr Mason said the ideal advertisement that a man could place would highlight his salary, independence, home ownership and caring nature. A sense of humour and physical attractiveness would enhance his appeal. Women should concentrate entirely on their physical attributes, using adjectives such as slim, tall and shapely.

Kirk warning over Toronto Blessing

By GILLIAN BOWDITCH, SCOTLAND CORRESPONDENT

THE Church of Scotland has warned members about the Toronto Blessing, a charismatic form of worship that originated in Canada and which can leave worshippers shaking violently, falling over, emitting animal noises and appearing drunk.

A detailed report by the Kirk's Panel on Doctrine, which is to be debated at the General Assembly next month, urges caution and says there is "excessive individualism, self-indulgence, elitism and theological triumphalism". It does not condemn the Toronto Blessing outright, saying that the Church may

"learn from greater openness to the Spirit", but it says there is little scriptural backing for the blessing.

The Toronto Blessing originated at the Toronto Airport Vineyard Christian Fellowship on January 20, 1994, and, according to the report, is "still in its embryonic stage". Speaking in tongues, prophecy and healing can be part of the experience.

The Rev John McPake, one of the authors, said: "The report articulates a range of serious concerns which advocates of the blessing would do well to ponder and reflect upon."

BBC to debunk myths of history

By ALEXANDRA FREAN, MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

THE BBC is aiming to debunk popular myths about the history of Britain with the production of a television series on the nation's past.

The 16 programmes — from when the Romans left Britain in the early 5th century, up to 1914 — will form one of the corporation's most ambitious factual series.

Janice Hadlow, editor of *A History of Britain*, said that the programmes would be aimed at a mass audience, but would incorporate intellectual theories and challenge conventional perspectives. "We look back at Elizabeth I and the Armada, knowing it all turned out to be OK for her. We see that time as one of great triumph for Britain. But

she was actually fighting for her life, both literally and as a stateswoman," she said. "She was fighting in Europe at a time when England was very beleaguered — it had been through 50 or 60 years of religious upheaval and was facing opposition from France and Spain."

"As we approach the millennium there's a huge amount of debate about what Britain is, how we got here, who we really are and how do we relate to the United States and Europe. That's what we hope to tackle."

She said that the series would draw from the works of contemporary historians and chroniclers of the past, using letters and diaries depicting

the lives of ordinary people. "We would hope to use things like the Paston letters. These were from a 15th-century family in Kent and are one of the earliest exchanges of letters. When the son went to London, his mother wrote to him. They give lots of details of everyday life."

Historians yesterday welcomed the series. Lord Blake, former Provost of Queen's College, Oxford, said: "People are very ignorant of their history and anything that brings it to a wider audience is to be welcomed."

The television series will be complemented by drama and music programmes on Radios 3 and 4. It will be ready for broadcast in 1999.

Boy's family blame police for cell death

By PAUL WILKINSON

THE family of a 15-year-old boy who was found hanging while in police custody accused the police of negligence yesterday and said that they were considering legal action.

They said the boy was obviously at risk of suicide, having threatened to kill himself when he was arrested, and that the police should have supervised him more carefully. The Police Complaints Authority is investigating.

David Green died on Wednesday in an intensive care unit, two days after being found unconscious in a cell at Hartlepool police station. He had been arrested on Sunday

night apparently as he attempted to burglarise a house near his home in Hartlepool. He was detained by the occupant until police arrived.

On Monday morning, members of his family visited him at the police station. At 3pm a custody officer found him unconscious with a cord around his neck. Attempts to revive him failed and he was taken to Hartlepool General Hospital.

Yesterday an inquest was opened and adjourned by Olof Bjarkeroth, the Cleveland Coroner. A post-mortem examination was carried out but no details were disclosed.

Cats on a warm roof more likely to fall

By MICHAEL HORNSBY

CATS risk many of their nine lives falling from high-rise buildings, a French vet said yesterday.

Addressing the annual congress of the World Small Animal Veterinary Association in Birmingham, Gilles Dupré said nine out of ten cats survived when they tumbled from high buildings. Some had walked away from falls of eight storeys or more, but "high-rise syndrome" was an increasing hazard.

Dr Dupré and his colleagues at the Clinique Fregis in Paris, which specialises in emergency care, have studied 413 cats which fell more than two storeys. Eighty per cent survived.

The research found that 72 per cent of the cats which fell or jumped from buildings were under two years old. After that age, it seemed, cats

learnt more sense. "As far as we know, cats, unlike humans, do not commit suicide by jumping from heights," Dr Dupré said. "They either fall by accident or because they are trying to catch something in the air."

But they do seem prone to jump or fall more often in the spring, and at other times when the sun comes out after prolonged overcast weather. Prompt and knowledgeable veterinary treatment was essential, Dr Dupré said, if the cats' luck was to last. "Two of the most common injuries are rupture of the lungs and internal bleeding which will not usually show up unless the chest X-ray is done immediately." Dr Dupré said improvements in emergency treatment had greatly enhanced the chances of survival.

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Pulp Fiction 'looks tame' as demand grows for real TV violence

By PAUL WILKINSON

TELEVISION shows such as *Blind Date* and *Gladiators* pander to a growing public desire for real, rather than fictional, sex and violence, a criminologist claimed yesterday. *Gladiators* was far more worrying than the violent film *Pulp Fiction*, Mike Presdee said, because people from children to grandparents sat around the television cheering on scantily clad women contestants hitting and

wrestling with each other. *Blind Date*, he said, was not romantic, but "naughty and too sexy". Mr Presdee, a reader in criminology at the University of Sunderland, and Gavin Carver, of the University of Kent, put these views in a paper, *The Consumption of Crime as Popular Pleasure*, which Mr Presdee will present at the British Sociological Conference at York University next week. The paper, which will be among 300 contributions to the conference by

sociologists from around the world, urges more honesty about the growing addiction to real violence. Mr Presdee said yesterday that violence and suffering had moved from drama to real people in recent years and "humiliation television" was pulling in the viewers. "Viewers want to see proper humiliation and cruelty. *Blind Date* is based on emotional cruelty. It can be nasty and shocking and often is sexually

gratuitous. Some contestants have been clearly badly affected by it. It is certainly not the romantic thing they set it out to be. Yet we love it, don't we? We can't wait to see the bit where they tear into each other. Isn't that quite worrying?" He said *Gladiators* "has both violence and sex. There are people with beautiful bodies hitting each other. The women are dressed in skimpy outfits and are trying to hurt one another, but it is seen to be OK. This is sex and violence for

the family and it worries me more than *Pulp Fiction* because it is real violence, whereas movies are staged drama. Television is producing violence to be enjoyed by the public." Fly-on-the-wall programmes such as *Police Stop*, which portrays actual car chases and crashes, show police are excited as much by the action as the viewers and criminals. He said: "Watching crime is big business. Young joyriders want the thrill of the

chase and try and provoke the police to create one. It would not be very exciting if the police did not respond, but they often do and the police are part of it. On the videos you can tell by the voices that the police are enjoying it." Chief Superintendent Chris Tate, head of operational support at West Yorkshire Police, rejected the idea that officers got pleasure from chases. He said: "Police are doing their job and enjoyment does not come into it. We acknowl-

edge that during a car chase adrenalin is produced and there are occasions where officers become over-involved in cases." Nobody was available to comment on *Blind Date* at London Weekend Television, but a spokesman for *Gladiators*, also made by LWT, said: "Gladiators is a popular family show which parents and grandparents obviously consider suitable for children, judging by the number of families who apply for tickets."

Scare about wild 'beast' spreads to Welsh hills

A MYSTERIOUS beast is stalking the countryside attacking sheep and worrying villagers in the Cambrian mountains, it was disclosed yesterday (Nick Nuttall writes). After the beast of Bodmin, the Fen tiger and the Surrey puma comes the beast — or beasties — of Bont.

Cynog Dafis, the local MP, said yesterday: "There is a fair consensus that a puma or black leopard is at large and that there may be more than one."

The MP, along with farmers' representatives and communities around the town of Pontrydyfendigaid, which is locally known as Bont, last night demanded urgent action and funds from the Welsh Office to track down the animal. The creature, sightings of which cover a 20-mile radius around the town over the past 18 months, was recently reported near the town's pre-primary school.

Mr Dafis said: "There is concern for livestock but now also concern for human safety." He added that the Veterinary Centre in Aberystwyth had confirmed that some sheep had been killed "not by dogs or foxes but something of a feline nature".

Hoaxers fox animal welfare group in clash over lambs

By NICK NUTTALL, ENVIRONMENT CORRESPONDENT

A SCHEME to compensate hill farmers for lambs killed by foxes has been abandoned after hoax calls sent animal welfare workers driving thousands of miles to bogus addresses.

The League Against Cruel Sports, which is against fox-hunting, launched the compensation scheme after claims by some farmers that a ban on hunting would lead to large-scale losses of lambs. The league offered to pick up carcasses and compensate North Wales farmers at market rates for every lamb proven to have been the victim of a fox.

Half the calls it received turned out to be bogus, with a large number of callers giving their name as Williams. "It is obviously a common name in Wales, but even then it was too many to be a coincidence," Chris Owen, of the league's Cheshire branch, said.

He had been driving up to 250 miles a day, often to fake addresses, in North Wales: the

league's four officers were exhausted after covering thousands of miles over the past few days.

Yesterday the scheme was abandoned, with about only 17 lamb carcasses having been collected. Mr Owen added: "It has been disappointing. There has obviously been an organised campaign."

The league said it now planned to expose farmers for failing to care for lambs and sheep. It claimed that staff found numerous dead and dying lambs and sheep which had not been attacked by foxes, but neglected by farmers. Video footage is being handed to the Ministry of Agriculture for investigation.

Janet Smart, also of the league, said there seemed to be a misconception among Welsh hill farmers that the league was opposed to pest control. She said it wanted to ban fox-hunting, but not the right of farmers to flush out foxes using hounds and shoot them. John Bryant, at the league's

London headquarters, said a useful scientific study to assess the damage caused by foxes had been damaged. "We offered to put our money where our mouth is and pay to see who is right."

However, Mr Bryant said the league would contact farmers' leaders to see if the compensation scheme and study could be tried next year. Farmers could have expected up to £40 compensation and the scheme had been officially welcomed, although many believed privately that it was a publicity stunt.

Lewis Griffiths, spokesman for the Farmers' Union of Wales, said that the league's motive had not been to compensate farmers but to prove its case that foxes were not to blame. He said it was regrettable that so many hoax calls had been used. "We had been wondering if they had the people and the finance to do this. We do not believe they can handle or had appreciated the size of the problem."



Glyn Williams, of Pandy Tudur, North Wales said he lost four of his lambs to foxes

Children attack policeman

A gang of teenage burglars attacked a detective in Coventry with an iron bar, concrete blocks and bricks. Detective Sergeant Stephen Francis, 43, of West Midlands Police, was recovering yesterday after having stitches for head wounds in the worst attack of his 22-year police career. Officers had been lying in wait for a gang in a council estate on Tuesday night. When the youths returned, the officers gave chase and Mr Francis was attacked. Seven youths aged as young as 14 were arrested and released at police bail. Detectives are searching for other juveniles.

Vicar drowned

The body of a vicar who drowned during a fishing trip on a lake was recovered yesterday. The Rev Geoffrey Calderbank, 38, had been with a friend near Tregaron, Cardiganshire, on Wednesday. The other angler swam ashore.

Hamster cruelty

A man convicted of biting the head off a hamster at a party has been banned from keeping animals for ten years. Owen Harkin, 25, who denied the charge, was also fined £150 with £600 costs by magistrates in Ellesmere Port, Cheshire.

Easter illness

More than 50 children are believed to have suffered food poisoning after sell-by dates on Easter eggs were covered with fake labels. The old eggs are believed to have been sold from market stalls in east London.

Dogs found dead

The charred and dismembered remains of five dogs were found in west Yorkshire, between Kippax and Fairburn Ings. The dogs, found by a kennel worker, are believed to have been young and healthy. Police are investigating.

Rocker arrested

The drummer of the American rock group Fun Lovin' Criminals has been arrested on suspicion of making obscene telephone calls in Leeds. Police traced calls made to gymnasts to the hotel room of Stephen Borovini, 29.

Organ restored

An organ played by the poet Milton and heard by Oliver Cromwell has been returned to Tewkesbury Abbey after a £500,000 restoration. The 17th-century organ will be heard by Princess Margaret at a thanksgiving service on Sunday.

£2m pint

Guinness is spending more than £2 million teaching bartenders in Europe to pour the perfect pint. Its team will show 14 countries the two-part pour method — filling the glass three-quarters full, pausing and then topping up.

CORRECTIONS

□ Group 4 security staff were not involved in an incident (report, April 2) in which a prisoner receiving hospital treatment in Sheffield was chained to custody officers.
□ The telephone number for the Cosmos Venice bargain break (travel news, yesterday) is 0161-480 5799.

Out-of-season treat with a nasty surprise



MEDICAL BRIEFING

FRESH-PICKED strawberries on the school dinner menu while snow still lies on the ground outside the classroom is an inviting thought. It is, however, just as well before eating the strawberries to know who has picked them, where their hands had been before they did the picking, and what the state of the fields' sanitation was like.

Strawberries picked in Mexico were recently bought by American federal authorities for distribution throughout schools in several states. By the time the Michigan authorities had traced an outbreak of hepatitis A to the strawberries, they had long since been distributed to, and presumably eaten by, 9,000 schoolchildren in 18 schools in six states.

Several eminent British doctors would have sympathy for those children and teachers who are by now probably already suffering the early signs and symptoms of hepatitis A. Although the disease, usually caused by contamination with urine and faeces, does not usually cause lasting damage, the initial symptoms can be distressing. The nausea is sometimes so bad that the sight of food, let alone its taste or smell, induces vomiting, coupled with headaches and a high temperature.

Hepatitis A is more infectious before the jaundice shows. Once it appears, patients usually start to feel slightly better.

The British medical estab-

lishment will feel much sympathy for the schoolchildren because many of them suffered similarly after a dinner given by the Society of Apothecaries. The soft-fruit pudding was apparently delicious, but its pickers had been paid a piece rate. To increase the weight of the fruit so that they would receive more money, some of the pickers had urinated over it: a high proportion of the doctors developed hepatitis A.

Children and adults can have protection from both hepatitis A and B. A special preparation of the hepatitis A injection is available for children. Adults can have a combined inoculation, Twinrix, which will give protection against both varieties. Twinrix needs three injections. A licence for a paediatric preparation is expected within months.

Strawberries are not the only food that is easily contaminated. A year or two ago pathologists who enjoyed drinking decided to take cultures from the peanuts in the bowls on the bar.

They found that dirty fingers dipped into the nuts had liberally coated the survivors in the bottom of the dishes with *E. coli*, a sure sign of faecal contamination, and that some of the drinkers hadn't washed their hands after a visit to the lavatory.

DR THOMAS STUTTFORD

Wartime father, 72, owns up

By ROBIN YOUNG

FRANK SHAW could soon be reunited with his wartime sweetheart after more than 50 years, and the daughter he left when she was three months old.

The former Sherwood Forester, now living in Nottingham, has come forward after his former girlfriend, Gaby, a Belgian, travelled to Nottingham at Easter to search for him with her daughter, Josette, who is now 51. Mr Shaw and Gaby first met in Brussels in the closing days of the war.

Gaby and Josette refused to disclose their surnames,



Girlfriend Gaby and the lost lover, Frank Shaw

because they did not want to upset Gaby's Belgian husband, who knew nothing of their quest.

Mr Shaw, 72, said yesterday: "It is not something I am proud of. I think about them often and I feel bad, especially

knowing now that Gaby's mother died four months after I left. I will be making contact with Josette as soon as possible, but I do not want to cause any problems with their families."

Mr Shaw, who was 20 at the time of his liaison with Gaby, then 18, later married Gwen, nearly 50 years ago. He had been "very shocked" to read newspaper reports of Gaby's search for him.

He said: "I had told my wife all about it. It happened before I met her. I had not told my two daughters, but when I did tell them they said not to worry, and that everyone had skeletons in their cupboard."

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ELECTION 97

'New Britain, according to Labour, is filled with happy families in the sort of snap we all love to send to granny'

■ The Labour Party Manifesto in full - see pullout in section 2
 ■ Labour's Northern babes - page 14
 ■ Sinn Fein's sinister style of campaigning - page 15

'We came for some privacy... it's spoiled things a bit'

Gretna Green bride who met John Major yesterday

Look out, the chicken has landed



Who are you calling chicken? The morning confrontation entertains photographers as the rival birds have their first flap



The fox, the rhino, and the bears get into the act: surprisingly, some were complaining that politics was becoming trivial

The election turned into a real pantomime yesterday when a succession of party supporters and protesters tried to make their points dressed in animal suits. The idea was not a complete success for anyone along the campaign trail. Ben Macintyre witnessed events



SERIOUS politics got the bird yesterday as two chickens fought over party honours. Along the way, a pair of bears, a fox and a rhinoceros also joined the growing circus on the campaign trail. It was that sort of a day.

First there was the oft pantomime chicken created by the Tories to follow Tony Blair and point up their claim that he had "chickened out" of a TV debate. It was then faced with a headless rival intended to demonstrate Conservative election panic.

In a bizarre scene at 8.30am, the headless pro-Labour chicken (later identified as Daily Mirror reporter David Pilditch, son of the disc-jockey "Diddy" David Hamilton) arrived at Tory Central Office intending to upstage the Tory bird as it was officially released for the first time.

Alex Alken, the Conservatives' chief press officer, objected to the presence of the Opposition bird, and a brief scuffle ensued. The Tory chicken (containing the musician Noel Flanagan) faced its decapitated competitor and the two performed a strange slow cockfight on Abingdon Green, opposite Parliament, to shouts of "peck 'im" from the assembled photographers.

Two oft bears, whose symbolism still remains obscure, had meanwhile appeared in front of the Institute of Civil Engineers, where Labour was launching its manifesto. They claimed to be from the Bear Alliance and were protesting that the election was turning into a circus.

When asked where they had come from, they would only say cryptically: "The woods."

Mr Blair then had to face a rhinoceros, possibly the most bizarre addition to the day's menagerie. It was standing outside the Baywater shopping centre, where the Labour leader had gone to distribute copies of the manifesto. The rhino appeared to be suffering from a rare dermatological condition, and was thus rather gloomy.

Initially taciturn, after close questioning, the pachyderm with a strong South African accent also revealed itself to be an ironic comment on the trivialisation of politics.

"My complaint is about the level of political debate, which is becoming ludicrously cheapened by a lot of people dressing up as animals," it said, before wandering off mournfully down Queensway, presumably in search of a

spin-doctor or, perhaps more urgently, a skin doctor.

By now the political procession had been joined by a fox - another contribution affiliated to the Daily Mirror - and set off in pursuit of the Tory chicken, which was in turn flying to Scotland to intercept Mr Blair on the next stage of his campaign.

As the Labour campaign flew to Edinburgh, Alastair Campbell, Mr Blair's press secretary, said: "We like the chicken. It is only a matter of time before it gets on the bus. We think the chicken is a potential leader of the Conservative Party."

On arrival in Scotland the Labour team headed straight to Stirling, constituency of Conservative Michael Forsyth, whose majority of just 236 votes makes him one of the country's most seriously endangered species. Early reports indicated that the chicken had landed, and was spotted outside a Stirling school holding up a placard demanding that Mr Blair "answer the west Lothian question" and revealing a political acuity rare for his breed.

The pro-Labour fox and the Tory chicken met up again as Tony Blair did a walkabout in the Stirling shopping precinct. The two creatures briefly tussled in front of Marks & Spencers before they were bundled away by visibly unamused Labour Party officials and Special Branch officers.

By the end of the day, the Tory chicken would suffer the traditional fate of such creatures, when its costume head was twisted off by a Stirling teenager, who ran away with it. The thief was pursued by Stirling police, cautioned for breach of the peace and made to return the trophy.

Mr Campbell said that Mr and Mrs Blair had invited the Tory chicken to dinner in Glasgow tonight, but that his Tory managers had refused, saying he would be roosting overnight back in London. "The chicken chickened out," said Mr Campbell, proving that even in the barnyard the spin continues.

The carnival of the animals has added some peculiar but welcome colour to the campaign. But sadly the life expectancy of the various beasts is short. The moment the squawking, flapping or grunting multitude shows signs of turning into thundering hoars, they will be sent, summarily, to the slaughterhouse.

Additional reporting by Stephen Farrell

Artificial flavours and nothing to bite into

What plans have Tories made for the possibility that on the eve of poll, the struggling young actor inside this chicken sells to the Daily Mirror for £5,000 his account of the bird's travels?

Stalking Tony Blair, he may come to admire him. Polling day brings headlines in every tabloid: "Free-range chicken votes Labour". Never mind. If the rumours of a Labour U-turn on hunting prove true, the fox may defect to the Liberal Democrats.

Two bears arrived outside the hall where Tony Blair was to unveil his manifesto carrying placards. Inside it was also fancy dress. John Prescott was dressed up as the deputy leader of the Labour Party. "Traditional values in a modern setting," declared Tony Blair, (quoting Mr Prescott).

I looked at his deputy. My view of Prescott was partly blocked by a bowl of roses on the table. His head, in a frozen, old Labour grimace, seemed to be emerging from the petals. Traditional values in a modern setting.

Hanging from the walls behind him were five enormous blank banners in five colours. This was to introduce us to them. They were the synthetic shades of those fustian Whip puddings people buy for easy-to-make desserts: artificial flavours and nothing to get your teeth into.

These colours are to be used for Labour posters across Britain. Instead of changing the message on

the posters, Labour's whizz-kids (who have taken advice from the advertising industry) will change the colours, frequently. Apparently this will give people the impression of change and movement, and gain our attention.

Reactionaries may feel that if the posters had something to say, that might also gain attention. But changing the colours involves less mental effort.

Listening to Mr Blair was no effort. He really had only one argument that he would share with Britain his hopes, but could not offer a timetable because that would be dishonest. Under the banner of "honesty in politics" the Labour leader is thus able to make a virtue of paucity.

Having flogged the words "promise", "vow" and "pledge" to death in his Party Conference speech last October, Mr Blair has now come up with "bond" and

"trust" as new variations on the theme.

His speech put me in mind of Senator William McCauley's assessment of Warren Harding. The President's speeches, said McCauley, left the impression of an army of phrases moving over the landscape in search of an idea.

"Sometimes these meandering words would actually capture a straggling thought and bear it triumphantly, a prisoner in their midst, until it died of servitude and overwork," McCauley said.

After the speech, he answered questions, pretending to choose from a sea of hands. "Adam Boulton, from Sky," he said, looking desperately around the auditorium for him. The penny dropped.

The Labour Leader has perfected his all-purpose answer to the question: Why has he changed Labour's policies?

"There's no going back to the past," he declares. As though beliefs change like the weather, beyond human control. To be in favour of capitalism in 1997 is as natural as to wear a light-weight suit in summer: a response to the environment.

Why is he a capitalist? Because this is 1997. Why was he a socialist in 1983? Because that was 1983, silly! My hunch might be wrong: but as I watched Tony Blair fielding inquiries, I saw, quivering beneath the surface confidence, intellectual panic.

A lesson in who not to blame

Peter Barnard delves beneath the mutual politeness of James Naughtie's Today interview with Tony Blair



THE past two mornings have offered an opportunity to compare and contrast the styles of two men as they bid for our attention, and even our affection, amid a cacophony of lesser voices.

They may come from different backgrounds, but in middle age they find themselves on the same stage under the same spotlight.

So how are we to choose between John Humphrys and James Naughtie?

The difference between them is more a matter of style than content, almost as if they were politicians. Humphrys is Welsh and Naughtie is a Scot, therefore neither can be said to have an innate affinity with the Middle England vote that each solicits daily on Radio 4's Today.

Humphrys is a bare-knuckle interviewer, prone to interruptions of "Hang on a minute! Naughtie is a gentler soul, as befits his other role as a music presenter. Humphrys is a Souza march to Naughtie's Chopin nocturne. Therefore Conservative Central Office would prefer to have Humphrys let loose on Tony Blair while Naughtie tackled John Major.

The reverse, of course,

has happened. On Wednesday, Humphrys confronted Major and yesterday Naughtie interviewed Blair at Labour's campaign headquarters. Naughtie may be politer than Humphrys but he is no less tenacious.

Naughtie began yesterday by asking Blair about that great non-event, the television debate. Every informed elector and his dog knows that a party which is 20 points ahead in the polls would be mad to risk all that with one slip on national television. Yet Blair could tell Naughtie that the Tories "changed their negotiating position", that they are "engaging in playground insults".

And, as he showed yesterday, there is one key lesson he can teach Major: even if you think the media is to blame, never blame the media. On Wednesday Major had railed at Humphrys for "hijacking" the interview to talk about sleaze.

On a couple of occasions yesterday Blair made it clear that when scare stories about Labour appeared, it was because the Tories had called a press conference or leaked something to reporters. Anti-Labour stories were all got up, not by the media, but by the Tories.

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Major's union blues colour newlyweds' big day



The real thing: the Rigney came to Gretna for a quiet wedding, but found a media army following Mr Major

TWO marriages were celebrated yesterday at the Old Blacksmith's of Gretna Green, "world famous" refuge of elopers down the centuries. Michael and Majella Rigney came from Londonderry in Northern Ireland for a quiet registrar's nuptial and blessing in the legendary Scottish smithy. At the same moment, John Major came with full media army in tow to celebrate the union of the crowns and take a symbol-laden swipe at Tony Blair's alleged plans to dismantle it.

"We came over here for some quiet and privacy, but it has all been taken over by this crowd. It's spoiled things a bit," said Mr Rigney as cameramen skirmished for the day's tartan photo-opportunity. The tarnished idyll of the new Mr and Mrs Rigney was a small price to pay for Mr Major as he dipped his toe a few yards across the border into Scotland's electoral fray, in a Brigadoon-style setting complete with piper, kilts and souvenir shop.

"I'm here to symbolise a marriage that has lasted 290 years and I hope will be good for another 290 and beyond. A marriage that suits both partners well," the Prime Minister said. To make clear that he



Mr Major chose Gretna to hammer home his stance on Anglo-Scottish union. Charles Bremner found a shaky wedlock with voters

was not merely talking about family values or his party's shaky wedlock with the voters, he posed in a near gale with Michael Forsyth, the Scottish Secretary of State, clutching a Union Flag with the Scottish banner.

Alongside stood the survivors of that other battered union, the Scottish Conservative Party. This was embodied in the formidable shape of Annabel Goldie, who took over the chair after the resignation of Sir Michael Hirst over an alleged past dalliance with a man. Dumfries, the Gretna constituency, is one of the handful of Scottish Tory seats which the party hopes to hold, but morale was audibly low. "We've sunk so low we can only go up," Douglas Younger, candidate for Roxburgh and Berwickshire confided to a colleague.

The Sassenach demeanour and prime ministerial pin-stripe clashed only a little with the local scenery when

Mr Major posed beside Willie Marshall, the Gretna piper. Resplendent in full regalia, Mr Marshall, a Gretna fixture for 44 years, droned swiftly into Scotland the Brave as Mr Major approached for the picture. No admirer of Mr Major, the piper said he would have preferred to have serenaded him with a rendition of *Over the Hills and Far Away*.

Robert the Bruce may have been born only a few miles north, but there were no modern Bravehearts to spoil the soundbites as Mr Major laid into Labour's devolution plans. They were the product of fashionable, pseudo-Scottish minds "down in London". Passing over past difficulties of Jacobite and other origin, the Prime Minister said there had never in all those 290 years been an election that mattered so much to the people of Scotland. Labour's plans for a Scottish Parliament would not only unravel

the kingdom, but would impose a 15 per cent tax rise.

Dumfries was ideal for tweaking this raw nerve because much of its population works in Carlisle and is not happy at the prospect of a Scottish surtax if Dumfries becomes a zone frontalière, like an off-licence in a Channel port.

"They'll be putting up a frontier post and asking for passports next," a local said. True Scottish interests, the Prime Minister insisted, lay with the Tories. "I passionately care about making sure that this union survives," he said, making the day's pun on Labour's "contract" being a "con trick". That wheeze, in which the Labour leader circulated his manifesto in the form of a personal manuscript, was a tribute to Mr Blair's Scottish education at Fettes College in Edinburgh.

"It's a pity that he didn't learn to do joined-up thinking after the joined-up writing." Across the frontier in Carlisle, Mr Major gave a pugnacious show for more than 1,000 people from the extending platform of his battle bus, successor to his soap box. There was only one slip-up — the name of the shop where the bus drew up — The Old Town Hall Fudge Shop.



A forgery: Mr Major brought Norma to Gretna, but the union he espoused was England with Scotland

Tory speaks of 'dirty vendetta' against Hirst

TORIES IN SCOTLAND

THE depth of the division among Scottish Tories was revealed yesterday when party members described how anonymous documents were used in a dirty tricks campaign against the former chairman. Talking openly for the first time about the infighting that forced Sir Michael Hirst to resign, Richard Cook, 25, a former member of the Tory executive committee in the constituency of Eastwood in Strathclyde, said documents had started arriving anonymously at his home as soon as Sir Michael expressed an interest in becoming the Tory candidate there.

"The source of many of these things I don't think will ever be known. They arrived in mysterious circumstances," he said.

Sir Michael had hoped to stand for the Tories in Eastwood after the resignation of the outgoing Tory MP, Allan Stewart. Sir Michael resigned last Saturday admitting "past indiscretions". He is alleged to have told senior Tories of a homosexual affair with his former personal as-

sistant. Mr Cook said he had received telephone calls making clear that some people were out to get Sir Michael. "They were phoning up and being openly hostile, saying this would not benefit the party long-term."

"A number of people obviously have various reasons, reasons sometimes that they weren't prepared to divulge, where you can only presume it's a personal and very bitter matter, and other people who openly said that Sir Michael had never done them any favours," he said.

Speaking on Radio 4's *The World at One*, Mr Cook said the vendetta was personal, and that he was not aware of political opposition to Sir Michael from any section of the party.

Another member of the Eastwood executive, an Hutchinson, said Sir Michael's enemies had been prepared to sacrifice party interest to get him out. He said they seized the general election as their first opportunity since Sir Michael's appointment as Tory chairman in Scotland to do him "serious damage".



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Building new Jerusalem wipes smile off Blair's face

ON THE cover of the Conservative manifesto there is a snapshot of John Major wearing a suit, pink and white striped shirt, and polka-dot dark-blue tie, and smiling as if Surrey, his favourite cricket team, had just beaten Lancashire by an innings at the Oval. He is still smiling, hair slightly ruffled, as he introduces the manifesto on the first inside page.

Tony Blair has chosen a very different image — by Lord Snowdon — for the cover of the Labour manifesto. Instead of a snapshot, Blair's face, untouched and half-hidden in shadow, is the cover. He wears an open-necked blue denim shirt.

Blair is presented as the brooding man of destiny, his look stern and determined, the famous toothy smile well hidden. Where Major's eyes look straight at you, Blair's are somewhere over your shoulder and peering towards a new Jerusalem where "Britain deserves better" — as they still are, with just a hint of a smile, as he introduces the manifesto on the first inside page.

Labour Party staff have



because Britain deserves better



Brian MacArthur sees Labour play its leader as the strongest card in a serious party game

been working on the manifesto for almost a year — it grew from the *New Labour, New Life for Britain* manifesto submitted to the party and voted through by members last year — and their decision has clearly been to promote Blair — "the Lead-

er" — as Labour's main attraction. There are two photographs of Major in the Tory manifesto; Labour has ten of Blair.

They have been carefully chosen. He is seen with three world statesmen — Nelson Mandela (where we do see

the famous smile), President Clinton and President Chirac. There are three with smiling children. Unlike the Tory manifesto, where Major was the only politician featured, a member of the Shadow Cabinet, John Prescott, is given the Page Three

slot. The new Britain, according to new Labour, is a Britain of happy families who cherish their children, and who are shown in 25 photographs, some featured twice.

They are the sort of snaps that we love to send to granny, who gets one look-in with grandpa, studying the family album. The families shop at the supermarket, travel by train, enjoy seaside carousels, play in the parks and marry in white in church.

thinking schoolboy's favourite football team, Manchester United.

Over the past two months, many hands contributed to drafting the final version of the manifesto, including Peter Mandelson, the campaign manager, Alastair Campbell, Blair's press secretary, Jonathan Powell, his chief of staff, and David Miliband and Matthew Taylor of Blair's policy team.

There was design input from the publishing manager Jocelyn Hillman. He briefed the design consultancy Giant, whose clients include the Design Council and Vauxhall, for the final product. Blair was revising the draft in his own hand until last weekend.

The Tory manifesto's 56 pages cost £2. Labour offers 40 pages for £1.99, with much more solid text and none of the graphics or computer-assisted postages. Labour also offers cassette and cassette versions (0171 277 3410) and mentions its website (address: <http://www.labourwin97.org.uk>). The Tories have similar facilities, not listed in their manifesto (address: www.conservative-party.org.uk).

Lofty aims, but where will cash come from?

Labour has discovered how not to lose elections. But it does not yet have a convincing strategy for office. Yesterday's manifesto, launched with a bravura performance by Tony Blair, is a mirror image of the Conservative one in its strengths, and weaknesses.

The Labour manifesto is stronger on campaigning than governing, whereas the Tory one is more of a management plan than an election strategy. Labour has certainly moved a long way since the 1980s. Mr Blair's advisers helpfully provided a briefing paper comparing the current manifesto with previous ones.

In the 1983 manifesto, famously dubbed the longest suicide note in history, the party admitted that its "proposals add up to a considerable increase in public spending". Admittedly, the Tories have not said where the money will come from, though they at least have a track record of meeting this target.

Mr Blair failed to answer the point when I put it to him at yesterday's launch, news conference. No wonder Mr Brown is keen not to rule out possible privatisations, such as that of the national air traffic control system, and I'll bet that the Tote will be back on the agenda. Mr Blair is right that the proposed measures to reduce unemployment should help, but it would be unwise to count on this money in the short term.

Moreover, savings from reducing unemployment should go to cutting public borrowing. There are always loose ends in any manifesto: in Labour's also over the accounting of the release of local authority capital receipts for building that will add to borrowing, while the Tories have some ragged edges in their proposals for transferring income tax allowances. The amounts may be relatively small, but they are indicative of tensions and pressures of public spending and borrowing that will face any new government.

A Blair government could make a difference, not just over constitutional reform but also in its economic and social priorities. But Labour's current minimalism risks producing such small changes as to disappoint the hopes created by its "Britain deserves better" slogan. At present, the dilemmas of government come second to the priorities of campaigning.



PETER RIDDELL

security system and the like — measures which Labour has opposed. Existing sales mean that the required proceeds are already sure for the coming year, but there is a £1.5 billion gap for the following year.

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Blair threatens a tough response to union trouble

REPORTS BY PHILIP WEBSTER AND JILL SHERMAN

TONY BLAIR made plain yesterday that he would have no truck with the leaders of striking unions who believed they could "get tough" with a government led by him.

"They will face an absolute implacable toughness if there is any talk of that sort at all," he told BBC Radio 4's *Today* programme yesterday morning. "I didn't spend three years turning the Labour Party into a modern party that is true to the principles of progress and justice to go backwards."

"We are not going back to those days. We paid a heavy price for it in the past. We are not paying that price again," he said.

Mr Blair's words, shortly before the publication of the Labour manifesto, were intended to blunt the renewed Tory offensive over the unions.

At the press conference at which the manifesto was launched, he said that his earlier statement had not been made out of machismo. "I say it to make clear to people that anybody who believes the next Labour government will return to the past is wrong."

The Labour leader has pledged to retain the basic elements of Tory legislation on union ballots, picketing and industrial action. However,

LABOUR MANIFESTO

The Conservatives have attacked Mr Blair's promise to give unions the right to recognition, should a majority of the "relevant workforce" in a workplace vote in a ballot to be represented by a union, and it became clear last week that Labour had left a lot of thinking to be done on the practicalities.

The commitment on recognition will appear in Section 2 of the Labour Party manifesto in full today in Section 2. The Liberal Democrat manifesto will appear on Monday.

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tant workforce" means. Party sources have said both that different units of the workforce could be balloted separately and that in some cases an employer would want different plants to take part in a single all-embracing ballot.

Disagreements would go to the Advisory Conciliation and Arbitration Service and then to the Central Arbitration Committee, which is in future to be headed by a judge. However, Mr Blair has been careful to emphasise that the measures are not an absolute priority. They may not appear in the first Queen's Speech.

Labour has also pledged to introduce trade union recognition at GCHQ, the government communications centre at Cheltenham.

Political parties would have to declare all donations over £5,000 and foreign funding of parties would be banned, under a Labour government, the party pledged yesterday (Valerie Ellison writes).

A Labour government would also ask the Nolan Committee on Standards in Public Life to consider how to regulate funding of political parties. New powers would be given to the Audit Commission to ensure high standards in local government.



Bill Morris, John Edmonds, Roger Lyons, Rodney Bickerstaffe, and Lew Adams. They are said to be smoothing Labour's campaign

UNION leaders yesterday dismissed accusations that they had struck a secret pact of silence to smooth Labour's election campaign. But they also refused to respond to Tony Blair's latest attack on the union movement in which he promised "implacable toughness" in the face of unrest.

The leaders of five of the biggest unions, representing 3.5 million people, had been accused of shunning major public appearances, statements and speeches to avoid any clashes with Labour that would give the Conservatives a political advantage.

John Edmonds, head of the GMB

Union leaders deny paper's conspiracy of silence claim

general union, which represents workers in industries from aerospace to the NHS, said: "It is ridiculous to suggest there is a conspiracy. This election is about politics, not union leaders. We will be doing our best to help Labour."

Lew Adams, who led last year's dispute on London's Underground as head of the rail union Aslef, said: "It is complete nonsense that there is a secret

vote Labour. Mr Morris would not respond to Mr Blair's warning.

Roger Lyons, head of the Manufacturing Science and Finance Union, was on holiday yesterday. But a spokesman said that the idea he would stay mute for a month was "laughable". On the hardening of Labour's attitude, he said: "Confrontations are less likely to happen now. There is far less national pay bargaining and the culture is different to that of the 1970s."

Rodney Bickerstaffe, head of Unicon, Britain's biggest union representing 1.3 million people, declined to comment on the allegations.

Child benefit for the over-16s to be reviewed

THE manifesto does not include a pledge to scrap child benefit for 16 to 18-year-olds, despite enthusiastic backing for the policy by Tony Blair and Gordon Brown last year.

The proposal, one of the most radical dreamt up by the Labour leadership, was dubbed the "teenage tax" by the Tories when it was proposed last April. But the manifesto instead fudges the issue by stating that a Labour government would review finance and maintenance for children aged over 16

SOCIAL SECURITY

to encourage more children to stay on at school.

Mr Brown set up a working party six months ago to look into how the savings from child benefit for this age group — potentially £600 million — could be channelled into educational allowances for poorer groups. But the working party has failed to come up with any cost effective, or electorally

palatable solutions. Aides to Gordon Brown yesterday insisted that the scheme would be revived under a Labour government as part of a review of post-16 education. But it is clear that despite the Shadow Chancellor's determination to keep the plan alive, Mr Blair was worried about going into the election with an unpopular policy that would have hit Middle England voters.

The manifesto instead pledges that the party will retain child benefit from birth to 16, uprated at least in line with inflation.

Another area where Labour is unclear on policy is over the future of the basic state pension. The party's existing policy is to retain the state pension, uprated with inflation, but backed by a second stakeholder pension. The manifesto repeats this policy but then argues that the whole issue would be reviewed in government.

Brown admits he may need to sell air traffic system

THE ECONOMY

GORDON BROWN said yesterday that Labour would consider privatising the National Air Traffic System after he was forced to concede that there was a £1.5 billion hole in his spending plans.

The admission came after Tony Blair was asked what Labour would do about the privatisation money which the Tories had planned to raise in the next two years. He claimed that the money would come through from privatisations which were already under way. But later Mr Brown, the Shadow Chancellor, admitted that this did not apply to the second year, 1998-99.

Asked on BBC Radio 4's *The World at One* whether there would be a £1.5 billion gap in 1998-99 if Labour did not raise more money through its own privatisations.

Mr Brown said: "Yes, but the Conservatives have not told us where the gap is to be filled." Asked whether he would privatise the air traffic system, which was expected to raise £1.5 billion, Mr Brown said: "Well, we have said we will look at this." He added that that privatisation on its own would not raise £1.5 billion. But asked again whether the air traffic system would have to be sold to fill the gap, he said: "Of course, I haven't ruled that out, and you have got to make a judgment as to whether the revenues you lose

are outweighed by the capital returns that you get."

The Tories exploited Labour's admission, claiming that the party had a £12 billion black hole. This includes £60 million from changes to single parent benefit, which Labour has previously said it would repeal.

Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister, accused Mr Blair of bowing to the union's tax and spend agenda. "Mr Brown threatens hefty tax rises in an emergency budget within weeks. Why does he need them? Mr Blair wants to keep our plans but not follow our policies," said Mr Heseltine. "He knows the unions and the Left will stop him bringing in privatisation receipts or reforming social security."

Labour aides later said Mr Brown would consider any privatisations, provided they were "safe". They said that the Tories had to be much clearer about their privatisation receipts before Labour would decide whether to accept them. The only privatisations which Labour has set its face against are London Underground and Channel 4, but yesterday Mr Brown's aides seemed prepared to consider any sell-offs. They also conceded that they would keep to Tory plans to raise £480 million through private finance in the National Health Service.

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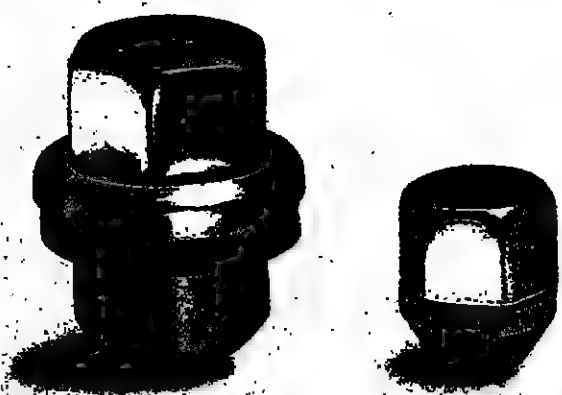
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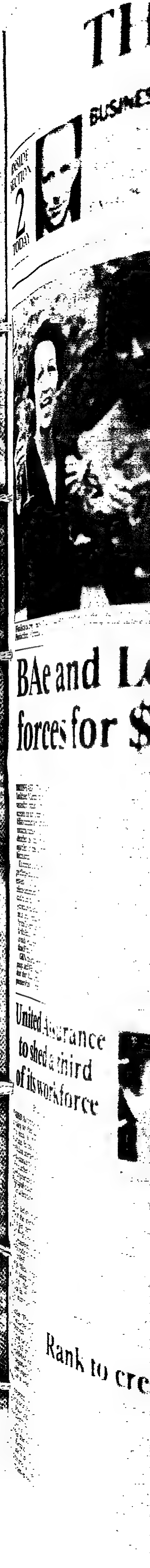
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FRIDAY APRIL 4 1997



Finalists of the Veuve Clicquot Business Woman of the Year Award, announced yesterday, include Bridget Blow, of Tinet, left; Andrea Womfor, Granada Productions; Virginia Lopalco, Pasta Reale; and Sue Lyons, Rolls-Royce Military Aero Engines. The fifth finalist is Nicola Foulston, of Brands Hatch Leisure

BaE and Lockheed join forces for \$5bn contract

By ERIC REGULY

BRITISH AEROSPACE and Lockheed Martin of the US yesterday joined forces to compete for an estimated \$5 billion contract for battlefield reconnaissance vehicles, described as the modern equivalent of the Cavalry's Indian scout.

The contract is a rare example of large-scale collaboration between the US and British defence departments. They decided to pool the contract last year and are expected to order about 1,600 vehicles — 1,200 for the US Army and the rest for the British Army. The cost of each vehicle comes to more than \$3 million.

GKN, the engineering company, and GEC-Marconi said that they had formed a rival partnership to compete for the

contract. GKN built 789 Warrior infantry-fighting vehicles for the British Army.

It is unlikely that other bidders will emerge because no other British company is thought to be capable of supplying the technology and integration systems for the highly complex machines.

The vehicles officially go under the name Tracer/FSCS, short for tactical reconnaissance armoured combat equipment requirement/future scout cavalry system. In Britain, they would replace the Army's ageing Scorpion and Scimitar vehicles, neither of which proved efficient machines in the Gulf and Bosnian conflicts.

A spokesman for Lockheed Martin, America's largest de-

fence company, said that Tracer would be designed to enter the battle theatre ahead of the main battle groups and gather intelligence through digital electronic "sniffing, seeing and hearing" systems.

The armoured vehicles, he said, would be fast, fairly small and capable of defending themselves with light guns. "Stealth" technology such as radar-absorbent material and heat shields would be used to make them hard to detect by radar and infra-red sensors.

BaE would contribute the systems integration expertise and some electronics while Lockheed Martin would supply the bulk of the sensors. Vickers, of the UK, and America's General Dynamics Land

Systems, both tank builders, have joined the team.

BaE said that the Joint Requirements Operations Committee of the US and British armies was scheduled to meet soon to hammer out Tracer's technical requirements. An invitation to tender is expected in the autumn, with the production contract being awarded in three or four years.

Ian Stopps, president of Lockheed Martin's Western European division, said: "The programme is the new model for allied government and industry co-operation."

The BaE-Lockheed Martin joint venture is thought to be the largest transatlantic military partnership since BaE and McDonnell Douglas, the

American fighter maker that is now part of Boeing, jointly produced the Harrier jump-jet for the US Marines in the 1980s.

BaE and Lockheed Martin are working on other joint projects, only one of which has been made public. They were hired by Britain's Defence Ministry for a feasibility study on ballistic missile defence systems.

The successful bidder hopes to export the Tracer vehicles to other countries. But the military forces of continental Europe, the natural buyers, have shown no interest in this type of system so far.

Instead, some countries are trying to develop pilotless aircraft for battlefield reconnaissance missions.

Bank admits rate rise would hurt exporters

By JANET BUSH AND ALASDAIR MURRAY

EDDIE GEORGE, Governor of the Bank of England, yesterday admitted a rise in interest rates would hurt British exporters but argued that tighter money was necessary because of the strength of the economy.

His remarks to the Foreign Bankers Association in Amsterdam coincided with the first ever survey of Britain's services sector, which suggested that activity is accelerating and that price pressures are growing.

The Report on Services published by NTC Research and the Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply underlined the growing divergence between an extremely buoyant services sector, accounting for nearly two thirds of the British economy, and a much more sluggish performance from manufacturing, which is struggling against the headwind of a strong pound.

Mr George yesterday drew attention to this split which he said was "undeniably uncomfortable" for making decisions about monetary policy. He said: "Such policy dilemmas do arise from time to time. But you cannot reasonably expose the economy as a whole to inflationary risks in order to protect the tradeable sectors."

The Bank has argued for several months that base rates should rise in response to the strength of the domestic economy and despite the sharp appreciation of the pound. Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, has stood firm against the advice, arguing that the strength of sterling is hurting manufacturing industry and has proved a powerful deflationary force.

However, yesterday's report on services from purchasing managers provided a warning about inflationary pressures building up in the economy. The institute said service sector activity, already running at a high level over the past nine months, accelerated in March.

It said prices charged by purchasing managers had risen for the fifth consecutive month and further pressure on prices was expected because of a significant increase in service sector wages, particularly among the highly skilled.

The survey excludes retailing because this is covered by the Confederation of British Industry. The CBI's latest distributive trades survey, published yesterday, showed the early timing of Easter had boosted retail sales in March, although the rate of growth was less than retailers had been expecting.

The survey showed that a positive balance of 33 per cent of retailers enjoyed sales growth last month, compared with 24 per cent in February and 27 per cent a year ago. The number of retailers expecting sales to improve in April also edged ahead from 38 per cent to 40 per cent.

The three-monthly measure of sales volumes, which has fallen for the past four months, levelled off at 31 per cent. But average sales growth remains well below the figures seen in the second half of last year.

Economists said the data showed high street sales were enjoying steady but unspectacular growth. The retail sales figures, to be published by the Office for National Statistics later this month, are predicted to show more modest growth than in February.

The volume of stocks remained steady suggesting that retailers believe stock levels are adequate and that manufacturers will see only limited benefits from the latest growth in retail activity.

All sectors of the industry except off-licences reported some growth last month, compared with a year ago, with sales of clothing and footwear especially strong.

Pennington, page 27
Economic view, page 29

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET INDICES
FTSE 100 4214.6 (-22.0)
Yield 3.53%
FTSE All share 2056.07 (-8.28)
Nikkei 18129.31 (+92.01)
New York 8472.44 (-45.58)
S&P Composite 748.86 (-1.25)

US RATE
Federal Funds 5 1/8% (5 1/8%)
Long Bond 94 1/2% (94 1/2%)
Yield 7.08% (7.08%)

LONDON MONEY
3-mth interbank 6 1/4% (6 1/4%)
Libor long gilt future (Jun) 108 1/8% (108 1/8%)

STERLING
New York 1.8480* (1.8430)
London 1.8413 (1.8445)
DM 2.7381 (2.7458)
FF 6.2241 (6.2493)
SF 132.72* (132.30)
Yen 201.46 (201.32)
C Index 98.3 (98.6)

US DOLLAR
London 1.5889* (1.5775)
DM 5.6245* (5.6463)
SF 1.4339* (1.4440)
Yen 192.72* (192.30)
C Index 103.7 (103.7)
Tokyo close Yen 122.77

NORTH SEA OIL
Brent 15-day (Jun) \$18.40 (\$18.75)

SOYABEANS
London close \$348.95 (\$350.55)
* denotes midday trading price

Threadbare

Profits of the top chartered surveyors are to be revealed for the first time although a peek through the Georgian doorways of Mayfair reveals rather threadbare looking carpets, not the deep blue traditionally expected from the country's leading partnerships. The big names pull in the fees but not necessarily the profits.
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Stepping back

Commercial Union has been forced to re-instate the practice of asking shareholders to vote on the annual report at the AGM after having dropped the procedure this year. Two institutions, meanwhile, are publishing their own corporate governance guidelines.
Pennington, page 27

United Assurance to shed a third of its workforce

By CAROLINE MERRELL

UNITED Assurance Group is planning to shed 2,300 jobs, more than a third of its workforce, in the wake of its £1.4 billion merger with Refuge Assurance last year.

The number is 400 higher than that predicted at the time. The group also plans to cut the number of branches from 279 to 116.

Profits before exceptional items at the merged group rose 18 per cent to £193.5 million. Profits before tax including exceptional items rose to £549.3 million, from £171.4 million in 1995.

George Mack, United Assurance's group chief executive, said that operating conditions in the insurance market continued to be difficult.

He added: "The integration of the two businesses provides the opportunity to make substantial cost savings." Provisions of £76.3 million have been established for the expected integration costs, with the company expecting to save £37 million a year from the merger.

At the moment, United is in consultation with the Department of Trade and Industry about whether to attribute the merger costs to shareholder funds. Earnings per share in 1996 were 36.1p, compared with 36p the previous year. The company increased div-

idends 35 per cent to 18p. Mr Mack said that about a third of its new business continued to come through its industrial branch, where premiums are collected by salesmen.

He said: "Many of the job losses will be in this area." The high proportion of industrial branch business contributed to a high expense ratio of about 40 per cent.

The company also made a provision of £71 million for possible mis-selling of personal pensions. Mr Mack said that it had isolated 11,000 cases so far where compensation could be due.

Tempos, page 28



Times journalist wins award

ROBERT MILLER, Banking Correspondent of *The Times*, has won the British Insurance and Investment Brokers Association's consumer journalist of the year award (broadsheet category). Mr Miller, who receives a cheque for £350, also won the Bradford & Bingley's personal finance journalist of the year award last October when *The Times* was named personal finance national newspaper of the year.

UK policyholders to receive free Colonial shares

By GAVIN LUMSDEN AND RACHEL BRIDGE

MORE than 250,000 UK policyholders of Colonial, the Australian financial services group that demutualised in December, will receive an average of £1,300 worth of free shares and options when the company lists in May.

The company is distributing 75 million shares to 500,000 members worldwide as part of its A\$1.3 billion (£650 million) plan to float jointly on the Australian and New Zealand stock markets. A further 90,000 UK members will benefit indirectly through their personal pension policies. However, the offer excludes about 80,000 people with unit trust and unit linked pensions. The minimum handout will

be 225 shares, worth around £290, mainly to holders of term policies. There is no maximum. The company is selling a further £52.5 million shares priced at £1.30. Qualifying members have until May 2 to decide if they want to retain their original allocation or top it up to 500 shares and lots of 100 thereafter.

An institutional offer will be made in a bookbuilding exercise between May 14 to 16. If the share price falls below the retail offer, Colonial has promised to refund the difference to members.

Colonial's demutualisation plans began in December 1994 after its acquisition of the State Bank. It intends to raise £100 million from the flotation with which it will buy out Jardine Fleming's 50 per cent stake in its Asian joint venture.

The shares will be denominated in Australian dollars. Colonial said: "We are trying to make everyone fully aware that it is not easy holding foreign shares. We want them to be aware that it will be more difficult for them than holding shares in BT, for example. There is a foreign exchange risk."

British pension funds have indicated that they will be selling their 78 million shares. Individual UK shareholders will be able to sell their shares prior to listing through a clearing facility arranged by Colonial.

Pennington, page 27

Rank to create 7,500 jobs

By ALASDAIR MURRAY

RANK GROUP is to spend £1.5 billion over the next five years, creating around 7,500 jobs in the process of expanding its UK leisure interests.

The company is aiming to open around 40 sites a year as it develops its leading brands, such as the Mecca bingo clubs. Rank is already the largest leisure company in the UK, with 300 bingo clubs, 74 Odeons, 31 Grosvenor casinos and 51 nightclubs.

David Flowers, director of the new leisure property and development department, said the company is targeting sites for 60 more bingo clubs, 15 casinos, 30 cinemas, 25 nightclubs and 50 theme bars. Money will also be used to upgrade existing sites.

The new department will be seeking to invest about £300 million a year. It will be based within the leisure division headquarters in Maidenhead.

Berkshire. Rank said some 350 jobs will be lost when the division moves in the summer.

Rank is aiming to open ten new Hard Rock Cafes this year and is selling off its remaining 20 per cent stake in Rank Xerox, for around £930 million. The shares rose 7p to 43 1/2p, with the market anticipating that Rank will soon launch a share buy-back.

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Lyonnais welcomes plans for merger

FROM ADAM SAGE
IN PARIS

JEROME MONOD, the chairman of Lyonnaise des Eaux, the French utilities group, yesterday welcomed plans for a merger with Cie de Suez, as an excellent project.

M Monod swept aside market doubts about a tie-up that would represent one of France's biggest financial transactions in recent years.

Announcing a net attributable profit of Fr1.35 billion for 1996, Lyonnaise, which owns the UK water companies, Northumbrian, Essex and Suffolk, and has interests in water treatment and waste management in Britain, said that its board was unanimously in favour of combining with Suez.

Suez, the Paris-based holding company, said on Tuesday that its board had approved the principle of a merger. Both boards will discuss the terms on April 11.

M Monod said: "This is an excellent project which aims to create a worldwide group of local services. Our perspectives will be enlarged by the merger and we will reach the critical size demanded by the markets."

M Monod believes Suez, which has financial assets estimated at Fr34 billion and a cash pile estimated at Fr5 billion, can provide the funds he needs to compete with his bigger rival, Générale des Eaux. The conglomerate that would emerge from the tie-up would be one of France's top ten companies with an annual turnover of about Fr195 billion.

Analysts in Paris say the deal appears to make industrial sense although doubts persist over the details of the transaction.

If Suez agrees to a demand from Saint-Gobain, one of its largest shareholders, for Fr3.4 billion payment, its cash pile would be eroded, making it less attractive to Lyonnaise.



Aad Jacobs, chairman, said Barings had brought in extra business from which the company as a whole benefited

ING helped to 25% rise by Barings

BY ROBERT MILLER

ING, the Dutch banking and insurance group that owns Barings, yesterday unveiled a 25 per cent increase in annual net profits to 3.3 billion guilders (£1.3 billion).

Aad Jacobs, chairman of ING, said ING Barings had contributed pre-tax profits of £454 million to overall group profits. He added that Barings had also brought in extra business from which the company as a whole benefited.

The total amount invested in Barings since ING rescued it for a nominal £1 two years ago and cleared the £830 million debt mountain was about £757 million, Mr Jacobs said. For this financial year ING has set its worldwide subsidiaries, including ING Barings, a target of an 11 per cent return on capital invested.

Mr Jacobs also announced that Hessel Lindenbergh, who took the helm immediately after Barings was bought, was to return to The Netherlands in July after doing "a fantastic job". He will be replaced by Marinus Minderhoud.

Surveyors to give estimates of their profits for first time

BY CARL MORTSHED

THE profits of Britain's big commercial surveying partnerships are being disclosed for the first time this week. A league table published tomorrow by *Estates Gazette*, the commercial property magazine, will rank the top property agents according to their earnings and profits, but a peep behind the Georgian doorways in Mayfair reveals that

the carpet is looking a bit threadbare in many firms.

The *Estates Gazette* 100 shows the big names pulling in the lion's share of fee income but not necessarily the profits to match. Jones Lang Wootton, a partnership, ranks in third place with UK fee income of £51 million. Its accounting profit last year was more than £4 million, shared

among 120 partners. Chesterton International and DTZ Debenham Thorpe both earned fee income of £60 million or more but produced less profit.

The 86 partners of Richard Ellis managed to earn profits of only between £1 million and £2 million on £33 million of UK fee income, compared with Hillier Parker's 66 partners who generated more than

£4 million from a similar fee base. The weakest performance disclosed among the top 20 firms was Weatherall Green & Smith. Its 60 partners are sharing a profit of less than £500,000 on some £25 million in fee income.

High overheads, expensive offices, competition and the cost of professional indemnity

insurance are all hurting profits. Unsurprisingly, firms with fewer mouths to feed make more money. Strutt & Parker, with only 31 partners, produced profits of more than £4 million on £23 million in fees.

Helen Pearce, Editor of *Estates Gazette*, said: "The lean and mean firms, where partners do without big support and have cost-effective offices, make the most money." Corporate clients are increasingly benchmarking their service providers, pushing surveyors into becoming more open, she said.

Some firms, notably Healey & Baker, Gerald Eve and Gooch & Wagstaff refused to disclose their UK revenues, despite calls for more openness from the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors.

Tempos, page 28

Management buyout at Peacock

BY GEORGE SIVELL

PEACOCK, the family company that runs Millets, the country and casual wear chain, is to be bought out by its management for £78 million in a deal financed by Cinven, the equity funding group.

Cinven is also to provide the financial backing necessary to expand the chain of

177 Peacock stores and 59 Millets stores to a nationwide chain of 500 stores. Sales by the whole Peacock group in 1996-97 are expected to have risen 33 per cent to £105 million.

The business was founded as Peacock's Penny Bazaar in 1882. The present chairman is Robert Peacock, although he has played a more limited role since the

appointment of Richard Kirk, the former Iceland managing director, as chief executive in August 1996. Mr Peacock will now become a non-executive deputy chairman after the management buyout.

Cinven said: "Peacock's recent track record is extremely impressive, and we believe that there is substantial growth yet to come from the business."

Westpac defies bid warning

FROM RACHEL BRIDGE
IN SYDNEY

WESTPAC, one of Australia's biggest banks, defied a Government warning not to preempt a major report into the banking sector yesterday with a A\$1.4 billion (£667 million) agreed bid for the Bank of Melbourne, a regional bank.

Less than two weeks ago Peter Costello, Treasurer, warned the banks not to make any commercial decisions before the Government responds to the imminent Wallis report, which is expected to relax the restrictions on mergers and takeovers in the financial sector.

Unveiling the proposals, Robert Joss, Westpac managing director, said: "This announcement is a significant milestone related to our aim of being the best in Australia and New Zealand."

However, Mr Costello said the deal had not yet been given approval. "They've taken a commercial judgement, they do so at their own risk. I make it clear that they shouldn't presume any outcome."

French to decide on GEC bid

BY CHRISTINE BUCKLEY
INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

THE FRENCH Government will name the bidders for Thomson-CSF, the defence electronics operation being privatised by France, on Monday amid speculation over whether GEC will enter the race.

GEC, the diversified industrial group, is believed to have submitted a bid for the French business in opposition to Alcatel-Alsthom, the French group with which GEC has a partnership.

Lagarde, the French group that has a missiles partnership with British Aerospace, is also bidding for the 58 per cent stake in Thomson-CSF to be sold next month.

The French Government has said that it is keen to welcome foreign bidders, although industry observers believe that GEC will have to offer a very full price in order to win. It is possible, however, that GEC will secure a place in a potential consortium for the order by putting itself on the bidding list.

Airbus sees euro as ally against Boeing

FROM OLIVER AUGUST IN TOULOUSE

BOEING fears that European monetary union will threaten America's dominant position in the aerospace sector, according to Airbus.

The European consortium, whose partners include British Aerospace, is confident the euro will become an international reserve currency equivalent to the dollar. All aviation sales worldwide are currently denominated in dollars.

An Airbus spokesman said: "Boeing is scared witless of the euro. They might have to start denominating sales in euros rather than dollars."

Selling aircraft in euros would shift the burden of hedging against exchange rate movements from Airbus to Boeing. At the moment, British Aerospace and the other Airbus partners spend mil-

lions every year on dollar futures to smooth currency fluctuations.

In a bid to surpass Boeing as the world's leading aerospace company, Airbus will double production over the next three years. Last year it produced 125 aircraft. The number will increase to 180 this year and to 220 in 1998, the consortium said.

Airbus executives in Toulouse are currently preparing an aggressive sales push into Boeing's traditional markets. In 2001 they will launch the biggest Airbus aircraft so far, the A340-600, seating 330 passengers.

Two years later Airbus will

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Zeneca chief's pay up 38% to £898,000

ZENECA'S chief executive saw his pay climb at more than twice the rate of group earnings in 1996. The pharmaceutical company's annual report, published yesterday, revealed that Sir David Barnes earned £898,000 in salary, bonus and other benefits, up 38 per cent from £651,000 in 1995. This compares with the group's 15 per cent rise in pre-tax profit, to £1 billion. Zeneca, however, has been one of the stock market's top performers. In 1996, the shares rose 31 per cent to £16.47 against the 11.6 per cent rise of the FT-SE 100 index. Fuelled by takeover speculation and the launch of several promising products, they have since risen further, although yesterday they closed down 15p at £17.21. Sir David, 65, has some 270,000 share options, most of them with an exercise price of 60p. John Mayo, Zeneca's finance director, was the second-highest paid director, with a pay package that rose 22 per cent to £611,000.

Berkeley sells portfolio

BERKELEY GROUP, the UK housebuilder and property developer, has sold a portfolio of commercial investment properties for £103 million. The consideration represents an initial yield of 7.6 per cent. The portfolio of 23 properties, comprising a mixture of retail warehouse parks, leisure properties, industrial warehouses and offices, was sold an unnamed UK life fund. The profit on the disposal amounts to £5.5 million. Part of the proceeds will go towards repaying bank debt and subordinated shareholder loans.

Coca-Cola bottling deal

COCA-COLA AMATIL, the Australian Coca-Cola franchise, became the largest Coca-Cola bottling group outside the US with the acquisition of San Miguel's soft drinks operation, Coca-Cola Bottlers Philippines Inc (CCBPI), for A\$3.4 billion (about £1.62 billion). CCBPI, which is 70 per cent owned by San Miguel and 30 per cent owned by The Coca-Cola Company, is the leading soft drink company in the Philippines. Under the deal, Coca-Cola Amatil will issue 293 million new shares to San Miguel, giving it a 25 per cent stake in the enlarged group.

Hyder motorway venture

HYDER, the water and electricity company, will take a leading role in managing and maintaining Finland's first privately funded motorway. Hyder is the largest shareholder in the winning Nelostie Oy Consortium that will operate Finland's main motorway between Helsinki and the tourist region of Lahti for 15 years. Hyder with 43 per cent, is investing £2.5 million in the venture. The contract involves upgrading 70 kilometres of road by constructing two new carriageways. Work begins next month.

Oliver back in black

OLIVER GROUP, the shoe retailer, returned to the black with pre-tax profits of £3.12 million in the 57 weeks to February 1, compared with losses of £5.71 million in the previous 12 months. Earnings were 12.32p a share, against losses of 22.61p. But there is again no dividend. The group has closed 18 of its stores and has relocated its headquarters after a year of difficult trading. There was a 7 per cent fall in turnover from £75 million to £69.7 million. The shares remained unchanged at 30p.

Schneider deserts Sema

SEMA, the Anglo-French computer services group, has lost its second-largest shareholder, Schneider SA, a French electrical company, dumped its 5.31 per cent stake on Tuesday, releasing 5.92 million shares into the market. The trading had no impact on Sema's share price on the day, but its shares fell 38.5p to £13.01 yesterday as it emerged that Schneider had sold for £12.95 a share. Pierre Bonelli, Sema's chief executive, said the company had agreed to the sale without complaint.

Dolphin lifts payout

DOLPHIN PACKAGING, manufacturer of flip-top hamburger containers and sandwich packs, increased its pre-tax profits 63.5 per cent to £5.38 million (£3.29 million) for the year ended December 31. The company was helped by a strong performance from Fairway Packaging, which it bought last year for £3 million. Dolphin's turnover was £39.2 million (£33.4 million) and earnings per share 15.4p (9.17p). A final dividend of 4.5p (3.3p) will be paid on May 20, raising the total dividend by 35 per cent to 7p (5.2p).

Rugby Estates ahead

RUGBY ESTATES, the retail property company, reported an 18 per cent rise in its pro forma net assets per share, from 130p to 153p, for the year to December 31. The company also reported a 125 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £2.37 million (£1.05 million). Rugby's performance was helped by the recent purchase of a 13,000 sq ft building in Covent Garden for £3.8 million by Covent Garden Estates, Rugby's 50 per cent-owned subsidiary. Earnings per share were 8.7p (4p). A final dividend of 1.6p (1.45p), due on June 4, gives a 2.4p (2.17p) total.

Dagenham Motors up

DAGENHAM MOTORS, Britain's largest Ford dealership group, recovered from a disappointing first half last year by lifting profits slightly from £5.11 million to £5.12 million for the year to December 31. The group was helped by a reorganisation of its car sales division which saw a 5 per cent reduction in staff and a 9 per cent boost in sales to £291.9 million. Earnings per share fell 5.5 per cent to 13.6p. An unchanged final dividend of 5.5p will be paid on May 29, maintaining the total at 7.7p.

TOURIST RATES

Bank	Bank	Bank	Bank
Buy	Sell	Buy	Sell
Australia \$	2.19	Malta	0.854
Austria Sch	2.08	Netherlands Gld	3.258
Belgium Fr	20.20	New Zealand \$	2.21
Canada \$	58.75	Norway Kr	11.67
Cyprus Cyp£	2.218	Portugal Esc	208.00
Denmark Kr	0.887	S Africa Rd	7.84
Finland Mk	11.03	Spain Ptas	248.50
France Fr	8.75	Sweden Kr	13.51
Germany Dr	9.89	Switzerland Fr	2.48
Greece Dr	2.51	Turkey Lira	21.088
Hong Kong \$	4.51	USA \$	1.740
Ireland P	13.45		
Israel Sh	1.09		
Italy Lira	5.16		
Japan Yen	2078		
	216.00		

Rates for small denomination bank notes only as supplied by Reuters PLC. Different rates apply to travellers' cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.

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CHANGING TIMES

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Wall Street continues to cast shadow over London

FURTHER losses on Wall Street in the wake of Wednesday's 90-point setback for the Dow Jones industrial average left share prices in London nursing fresh falls.

Attempts to steady the market met with only limited success as the FT-SE 100 index lost further ground in late trading to end 22.0 down at 4,214.6 in thin conditions. Further volatility can be expected today ahead of the US payroll numbers, which could provide the signal for another rise in US interest rates.

By the close of business a meagre 800 million shares had changed hands. Much of this was made up of bed-and-breakfast transactions designed to establish tax losses ahead of the financial year-end later today.

The losses might have been greater had it not been for a strong performance from the utilities. It seems worries about a windfall tax being imposed by an incoming Labour government have been put on the backburner, while their defensive qualities continue to be sought in a falling market. Credit Lyonnais Laing and Panmure Gordon reckon that a windfall tax has already been factored into prices. Laing says they look cheap and should be bought.

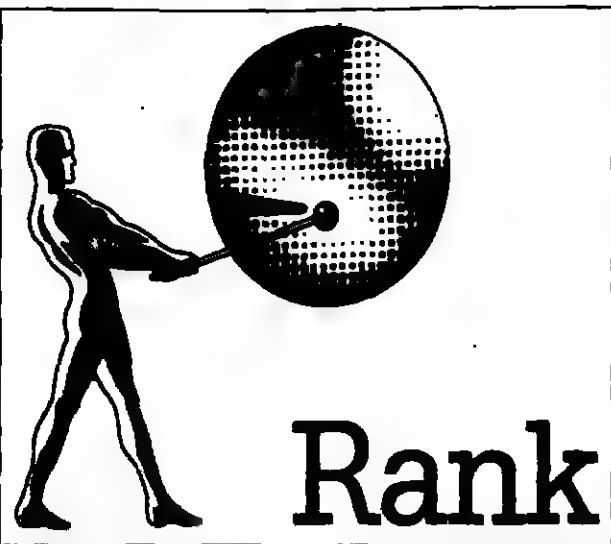
Leading the charge were the power generators, where National Power put on 17p at 490p, and PowerGen 16p at 608p.

Anglo American at Panmure rates PowerGen as a "buy", claiming it represents good value for money, boasts a strong balance sheet and cash flows and should be able to deal comfortably with a windfall tax. Continued economic growth would lead to increased demand for electricity.

Laing also sees BGC, 21p better at 167p, and Centrica, 1p lighter at 60p, as "buy" with National Grid, 1p firmer at 208p, and Southern Electric, 1p dearer at 388p, and Scottish Hydro, 21p better at 364p, as "key buys".

In the water sector, Severn Trent stood out with a rise of 11p to 696p, while gains were also recorded in Thames Water, 6p at 666p, and South West Water, 6p to 671p.

The news that industrial gas prices in the US were rising spilled over into BOC Group, 8p better at 940p. Praxair in the US has increased the price of both carbon dioxide and hydrogen by 4 per cent and 7



The famous gongman will stay at Rank, up 9p at 436p

per cent respectively. Now brokers expect BOC, one of the big players in the market, to follow suit.

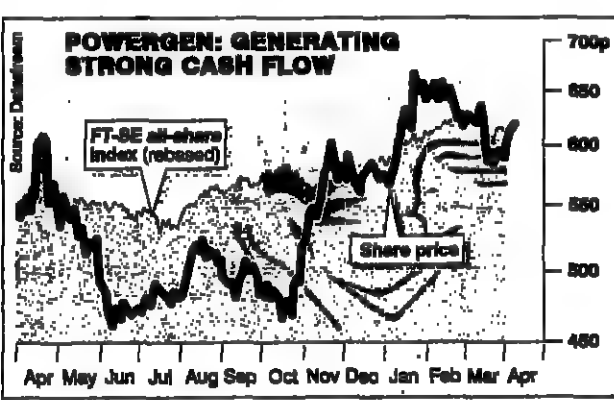
Rank Organisation continued to benefit from this week's sale of its film distribution unit to Carlton Communications for £65 million with a rise of 91p to 436p. But the deal did not include the "gongman" who has provided the

opening sequence for Rank films since 1935. This latest £300 million restructuring programme, which has now been completed, Lehman Brothers, the US securities house, says the disposal is earnings enhancing and it remains a firm buyer.

Speculative buying lifted Cementation 13p to 60p after it emerged that Laurie

Blenheim, Anthony Chattwell has resigned as a director of Cementation.

Better than expected profits news and some encouraging comments about current trading lifted Laird Group 44p to 39p. Worries about the impact of a strong pound were swept to one side. ABN Amro Hoare Govett and Societe Generale Strauss Turnbull, the brokers, have both come



POWERGEN: GENERATING STRONG CASH FLOW

out with buy recommendations and others are expected to lift their forecasts.

Sema Group dropped 38p to £13.01 after Schneider, the French electrical group, sold its 5.31 per cent stake in the market. The 5.92 million shares were sold to various institutions by HSBC James Capel, the broker, at £12.95. Pierre Bonelli, chief executive of Sema, said the disposal had the full backing of his board and would improve liquidity in the shares.

Airtours fell 38p to 923p after reports that Carnival Corporation, its biggest shareholder with almost 30 per cent, had decided against raising its stake in the company.

The profits setback at Senior Engineering was even worse than first imagined, but that did not discourage market bulls, with the price closing 8p better at 124p.

Brokers were also pleased with Dolphin Packaging, which showed pre-tax profits up from £3.29 million to £5.38 million. The shares responded with a jump of 15p to 222p. Headlam fell 9p to 309p despite a healthy increase in profits and a strong start to trading in the current year.

But there was little cheer for shareholders of A.H. Hall Group, with the price dropping 7p to 25p on the news that it had traded at a small loss in the second half and was unlikely to pay a dividend for the year to March. The group reported a surplus of £170,000 in the first six months.

GIIL-EDGED: Prices fluctuated in narrow limits for much of the day as investors anxiously awaited today's farm payroll numbers for signs of growing inflationary pressures. It is feared that last week's quarter-point rise in US rates could soon be followed by further increases.

The June series of the gilt was 2 1/2 lower at £108.33 in modest trading that saw 38,000 contracts completed. Treasury 8 per cent 2015 was 1/8 lower at £101.5 and Treasury 8 per cent 2000 a tick off at £102.33.

NEW YORK: Shares traded lower in the morning, depressed by a sell-off in IBM and concern about today's release of March employment figures. By midday the Dow Jones industrial average was down 44.56 points to 6,472.44. On Friday technical problems at Life, the Life options quoted refer to those of April 2.

MAJOR INDICES

New York (midday):	
Dow Jones	6472.44 (-44.56)
S&P Composite	748.80 (-1.25)
Tokyo:	
Nikkei Average	18129.31 (+92.01)
Hong Kong:	
Hang Seng	12055.17 (+81.15)
Amsterdam:	
AEX	702.11 (+4.44)
Sydney:	
ASX	2361.10 (+5.8)
Frankfurt:	
DAX	3215.24 (+60.67)
Singapore:	
SEAC	2078.08 (+11.73)
Brussels:	
General	11632.06 (+125.69)
Paris:	
CAC	2514.52 (+15.76)
Zurich:	
SIX	932.10 (+4.58)
London:	
FT 30	4210.50 (-22.0)
FTSE 100	4214.6 (-22.0)
FTSE 250	4504.6 (-2.7)
FTSE 350	2082.8 (-4.9)
FTSE Europe 100	2054.4 (-21.8)
FTSE All-Share	2054.07 (+1.38)
FTSE Non Financials	2123.72 (-0.08)
FTSE Fixed Interest	117.18 (-0.04)
FTSE Govt Secs	93.40 (-0.12)
Bargains	78.62
SEAG Volume	806.3m
US:	
Dollar Index	1.6415 (-0.0032)
German Mark	2.7897 (-0.0008)
Swiss Franc	1.4611 (-0.0001)
Bank of England official rate (4pm)	6.5 (-0.3)
ESCR	1.4034
ESDR	1.1857
RPI	155.0 Feb (2.7%) Jan 1997=100
RPIX	154.5 Feb (2.9%) Jan 1997=100

RECENT ISSUES

Aurora Inv Trust	100	...
Avalon Oil	103p	...
AVIS Europe	120p	...
Belvedere Antebay	42	...
Chartwell Athletic	60p	...
Diagonal	295	...
Dobbies Grdn Ctrs	260	...
Dorchester	71p	...
Harvey Nash	180p	...
Heat's	210p	...
Helpline Group	117p	...
KBC Advant Techs	237p	...
London Bridge Stw	208p	...
M & G High Income	67p	...
M & G High Pckg	101p	...
Newcastle Ltd	139	...
PSD Group	248p	...
Radcliffe Properties	42	...
Presbury Leisure	2p	...
Q Group	115p	...
River & Merc 1st UK	99p	...
Screen	5	...
Total Office Grp	150p	...
Whitehead Mann	144p	...
World Telecom	171p	...
Worldwide	177	...

Bocure n/p (9)	15p	- 4p
Cliveden n/p (75)	7p	+ 1
JCK Oil & Gas n/p (34)	7p	+ 1
Novo n/p (800)	10p	- 14p
Seville Gordon n/p (55)

RISSE:	
Laird	380p (+44p)
Dolphin Pack	222p (+15p)
US Sports	100p (+17p)
BT	387p (+10p)
BTG	648p (+16p)
FALLS:	
Some	148p (-18p)
Aspen Corp	180p (-11p)
Danka & Syle	450p (-27p)
Airtours	923p (-38p)
Caribb Pharms	877p (-30p)
Smithline	846p (-19p)
De La Rue	523p (-10p)
Farey Group	579p (-10p)

Closing Prices Page 31

TEMPUS

Widows and orphans

AFTER all the fuss from institutions about the orphan assets (or fantasy funds, if you believe it), the merged United Refuse Assurance business probably felt more than usually compelled to produce a little extra in the full-year results by hacking away at the core business.

A huge reduction in branch offices, from 279 to 116, should enable United to streamline the collection of premiums and marketing of insurance products. United's big task is to convert its market of low-income households from a weekly cash collection to the cheaper mechanism of bank direct debits but this quaint business has attractions. It is a large market, in marketing terms "Cs" and "Ds" outnumber the affluent As and Bs pursued aggressively by other insurers and the antique collection process establishes a high

level of customer loyalty. Better still, it is a market almost ignored by the big insurers. Steady business flow and cost-cutting make United a great yield play; appropriately, a widows and orphans stock. But United reckons the risk of the merger (and the benefits) should accrue to shareholders, not policyholders. By creating a service company, United could ringfence the £76 million cost of the merger and let shareholders gain 100 per cent of the cost savings. United argues that policyholders would benefit by being spared the risks and costs of the merger. Clearly, they could be spared the costs by allocating the entire £76 million burden to United's shareholders but, if the merger produces worse investment management than they previously enjoyed, the policyholders will not be spared the risk.

Laird

LAIRD has emerged from the wreckage of the European automotive industry with fewer wounds than it was nursing at half-time. Six months ago, the tale was of a dire German market and lacklustre results elsewhere. Profits from its escape route — computer assembly — came too little, too late.

The transformation has been breathtaking. While the sores that defaced the interim results have not entirely healed, they look less painful. Germany is still depressed, but Laird is in full flight from the country, cutting its 2,500-strong automotive workforce by some 40 per cent. Meanwhile, it has been following its customers into the lower-cost Czech Republic and Spain, and been rewarded with strong growth. Laird is the market

leader in car door sealsants

and its ability to extract profits from Europe bodies well for its £1.8 million investment in the US, from which it expects an influx of cash by 1998. Meanwhile, its non-automotive businesses, which take in other plastics and computer keyboards, now produce over half of the profits, reducing its dependence on the motor sector and giving it a credible second leg.

All told, Laird is in far better shape than the market has so far given it credit for. With a strong start to the year and guarantees of long-term growth falling into place as each month passes, its shares deserve better than a discount to the market.

Eurotunnel

THE City view on last November's fire in the Channel Tunnel is that, financially, this is a mere pin-prick for Eurotunnel. True, Eurotunnel's handling of the affair was a public relations disaster, and the fire renewed powerful fears about travelling under the sea.

But, as yesterday's traffic figures show, the convenience of the tunnel can conquer such phobias. And the cost of the disruption to Eurotunnel — no more than £10 million after insurance — is dwarfed by £9 billion of debt. Eurotunnel was bust before the fire, and is still bust afterwards. Without nailing down October's refinancing deal, lost revenues become irrelevant.

That deal could still be torn up if the safety authorities force Eurotunnel to abandon the controversial open-sided freight wagons, blamed by the Kent Fire Brigade for fanning the blaze. Robert

Malpas, the British co-chairman

yesterday mounted a robust defence of the wagons, rubbishing the alleged blow-torch effect as "a fallacy".

Mr Malpas needs the Channel Tunnel Safety Authority to back him up. If not, the blow to the banks' confidence could be more important than the cost of new wagons. Eurotunnel has already been proved wrong about the scale of the disruption the fire would cause, and the integrity of its safety procedures. It cannot afford to be wrong again.

Survivors

THERE was a time when partnership in a big professional firm was a prize worth equal. For a few City law or accountancy firms, it may still be so but for many young chartered surveyors, partnership looks as much a liability as the road to riches. This profession has never really recovered from the crushing blow of the last property

crash. While firms of chartered surveyors scrambled for diminishing business in the early 1990s, accountants pinched their consulting business and clients squeezed the fees on valuations and property management.

Since then, the property market has recovered and confidence continues to improve but profitability remains weak. Fee levels have not improved and costs are still too high. At least one major firm has seen its high-flying junior staff quit after being offered partnership. After seeing the accounts, they fled to smaller firms.

There are exceptions. Savills has benefited from the buoyant agricultural land market and sales of expensive homes. But commercial surveyors are still reluctant to cut their cloth to suit a leaner world and disperse with huge payrolls and Mayfair offices. A cottage industry with few barriers to entry cannot afford mansions.

EDITED BY CARL MORTSHED

COMMODITIES

LITFE				ICE-180 (London 6/10/98)				GNI LONDON GRAIN FUTURES			
CRUDE OILS (per barrel FOB)				LITFE WHEAT				LITFE BARLEY			
COCOA				ICE-180				ICE-180			
May	1044-1040	Jul	1052-1078	May	98.75	Jul	98.00	May	98.75	Jul	98.00
Jun	1058-1056	Sep	1040-1087	Jun	98.75	Aug	98.00	Jun	98.75	Aug	98.00
Jul	1058-1056	Oct	1058-1087	Jul	98.75	Sep	98.00	Jul	98.75	Sep	98.00
Aug	1058-1056	Nov	1128-1111	Aug	98.75	Oct	98.00	Aug	98.75	Oct	98.00
Sep	1058-1056	Dec	1128-1111	Sep	98.75	Nov	98.00	Sep	98.75	Nov	98.00
Oct	1058-1056	Jan	1128-1111	Oct	98.75	Dec	98.00	Oct	98.75	Dec	98.00
Nov	1058-1056	Feb	1128-1111	Nov	98.75	Jan	98.00	Nov	98.75	Jan	98.00
Dec	1058-1056	Mar	1128-1111	Dec	98.75	Feb	98.00	Dec	98.75	Feb	98.00
Jan	1058-1056	Apr	1128-1111	Jan	98.75	Mar	98.00	Jan	98.75	Mar	98.00
Feb	1058-1056	May	1128-1111	Feb	98.75	Apr	98.00	Feb	98.75	Apr	98.00
Mar	1058-1056	Jun	1128-1111	Mar	98.75	May	98.00	Mar	98.75	May	98.00
Apr	1058-1056	Jul	1128-1111	Apr	98.75	Jun	98.00	Apr	98.75	Jun	98.00
May	1058-1056	Aug	1128-1111	May	98.75	Jul	98.00	May	98.75	Jul	98.00
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Jun	1058-1056	Sep	1128-1111	Jun	98.75	Aug	98.00	Jun	98.75	Aug	98.00
Jul	1058-1056	Oct	1128-1111	Jul	98.75	Sep	98.00	Jul	98.75	Sep	98.00
Aug	1058-1056	Nov	1128-1111	Aug	98.75	Oct	98.00	Aug	98.75	Oct	98.00
Sep	1058-1056	Dec	1128-1111	Sep	98.75	Nov	98.00	Sep	98.75	Nov	98.00
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THE TIMES

CITY DIARY

Safaris after the City jungle

PIERRE Mourgue d'Algue is trading his City monkey suit for a pair of khaki shorts. The dashing managing director and co-founder of Latinvest has turned down a substantial sweetener to spend another five years with the investment bank, bought last year by Banco Bilbao Vizcaya, in favour of the African bush. After hunting with the vultures at Chicope, Hoare Govett, and Schroders, Mourgue d'Algue, 37, wants to build up his "ecofriendly" safari business, operating out of Galdessa Camp, Kenya. With plans to build a ranch in South Africa and set up a hotels agency in Switzerland, it comes as a surprise to hear Mourgue d'Algue liken himself to an elephant. "Zey are solitary animals," he smooches, "zey set their sights on something, zen go for it."



Mourgue d'Algue likens himself to an elephant

Conroy's gold

PROFESSOR Richard Conroy is back in the public eye, almost two years to the day since leaving Arcon International Resources, the mining company that he founded. The former Irish senator and Professor of Physiology at the Royal College of Surgeons in Dublin, is listing his new company, on Oxfen. Conroy Diamonds and Gold's main asset is a gold prospect at Clontarf, Co Monaghan, valued in the £3.6 million to £5.5 million range. Conroy is now planning to tap 90 to 100 holes in the lucrative-looking vein.

Survivor's medal

TORY sleaze stories are welcome at one company, at least. Jean Manson Souvenirs, a Surrey firm that sells trinkets to cathedral and museum shops, is trying desperately to clear its shelves of 986 keyrings engraved "Tory Rule Survivor's Medal". Cast three years ago, in a fit of pique, before the economic upturn and unemployment downturn, Mike Hanson, the company's head, thought the political souvenirs had past their sell-by date. He has awarded 14 medals to seriously deserving individuals but, inspired by recent scandals, he is selling the remainder at 80p each.

PETER WARD and Michael Hickey are on the move. The dynamic corporate financiers, at Quilter Goodson before it was snapped up in 1986 by Banque Paribas, where they have worked until now specialising in property, are off to the English Trust Company.

Croft award

AN ENGLISH computer networking company has fallen foul of the Academy of Motion Pictures, Arts, and Sciences. The announcement from Croft on the World Wide Web that it had won a "Computer Industry Oscar" sent shockwaves through the Internet. Phil Renton, Croft managing director, received an angry letter from Ladas and Parry, the New York law firm acting for the Californian-based Academy, pointing out that "Oscar" is a trade name owned by the Academy. Croft had in fact won "Digital Reseller of the Year".

MORAG PRESTON

ECONOMIC VIEW

ANATOLE KALETSKY



Major finds it's too late to look beyond the pocketbook

The Tories have failed to win credit for their economic successes

Poor John Major: the universal scepticism provoked by his launch of the Tory manifesto on Tuesday said it all about the electoral rout he now faces. The easy ride Tony Blair enjoyed yesterday, by contrast, suggested why Labour is well on the way to winning with the biggest majority enjoyed by any British governing party since the Second World War. The key point is simple enough. The Tories, despite their success in managing the economy since White Wednesday, are judged to be incompetent, unreliable and dishonest. Against this list of negatives, the Labour Party does not need to offer any positive distinctive policies. To win, Mr Blair has only to present a reassuring air of self-deprecation and speak frankly about how little he can realistically promise to achieve.

But why has Labour found it so easy to neutralise the good economic record? And why do voters now seem so unmoved by Tory promises of further tax cuts — especially ones carefully crafted to reinforce their image as a party of family values?

The manifesto launches suggested some answers. Challenged to explain why he had failed to keep the promises on taxes and exchange-rate stability that he made in the 1992 election manifesto, Mr Major recited a laundry-list of economic achievements which he had delivered and had not even promised or imagined possible five years ago. Britain now has the strongest economy in Europe; the lowest interest rates in a generation and Europe's best record on unemployment.

These claims are broadly true, though not as conclusive as Mr Major suggests. Britain's performance in relation to other European economies was discussed at length in this column two weeks ago. Britain has certainly performed better than Germany, France or Italy since the 1992 recession, but, taking the whole 18-year period since 1979, Britain's record is very similar to the Continent's in terms of both growth and employment. However, Britain's performance in relation to the rest of the world is now unquestionably better than it was in the 1960s. Thirty years ago, Britain consistently lagged behind every other OECD country. Indeed there was only one year between 1960 and 1982 in which Britain's GDP growth exceeded the OECD average. Since 1983, by contrast, Britain's growth rate has beaten the OECD average in 8 out of 15 years — although it has also suffered more economic instability than any other country.

But the Tories' failure to

capitalise on their economic record cannot be explained by such esoteric arguments about statistics. There is a much simpler explanation: the Government's failure to gain any credit for its undoubted economic achievements is entirely Mr Major's fault.

The fundamental cause goes back to the monetarist mantra of the 1980s: that government policy could do nothing to stimulate economic growth, to overcome recessions or to create employment. By the time Mr Major became Prime Minister, the public had finally been cowed into believing this nonsense. The fateful decision to join the European exchange-rate mechanism was the traumatic event which etched this delusion indelibly in the national psyche, just as the race towards European Monetary Union is today the symbol of the same madness in Germany and France.

When Britain left the ERM and suddenly adopted a sensible and pragmatic policy of active demand management, Mr Major had a golden opportunity to claim credit for the Damascene conversion. But this would have required an open repudiation of the ERM, monetary union and the whole panoply of monetarist dogma which Mr Major learnt by rote in his years at the Treasury. The Prime Minister preferred to brazen it out. He pretended that nothing much had changed — his policies had been right all along and if anything had happened, it was all the fault of the Germans. As they observed the growing

divergence between economic reality and government rhetoric after White Wednesday, it was hardly surprising that people decided Mr Major did not know what he was doing and was not to be trusted. It was even more predictable that the tenuous link between government popularity and economic performance broke down completely after September 1992.

To cap it all, Mr Major, in his panic after White Wednesday, also allowed the Bank of England to promote the idea that decisions on monetary policy should be taken out of the hands of politicians and put under the technocratic control of an independent central bank. He thus lost all the pos-

Taxes and public spending exist to express social preferences

ible credit for his one unquestionable economic achievement — low inflation. Worse still, from the Tory standpoint, he simultaneously neutralised the voters' traditional fear that a Labour government would mean rising prices and high mortgage rates.

But it is not only for the failure to capitalise on general economic management that the Tories should blame Mr Major. In Wednesday's manifesto launch, Mr Major also faced a barrage of hostile questioning about his perfectly reasonable (though far from perfect) proposal to offer a tax concession to encourage marriage. The main criticism was mindless but well deserved: Where will

the money come from? This is, of course, exactly the phrase which Mr Major has used to heckle every Labour policy proposal on any subject, from devolution for Scotland and London to reforming teacher training or changing the ways that children are taught. It is a mindless phrase which has completely stifled all rational debate in Britain about setting the right priorities in public spending and reforming the tax structure. Now Mr Major is getting a taste of his own medicine.

Where the money will come from is not the crucial issue about a policy which is supposed to change the balance between different types of taxes, rather than reduce the total tax burden. Anyway, Mr Major made the source of the money clear enough: the new marriage allowance would take precedence over

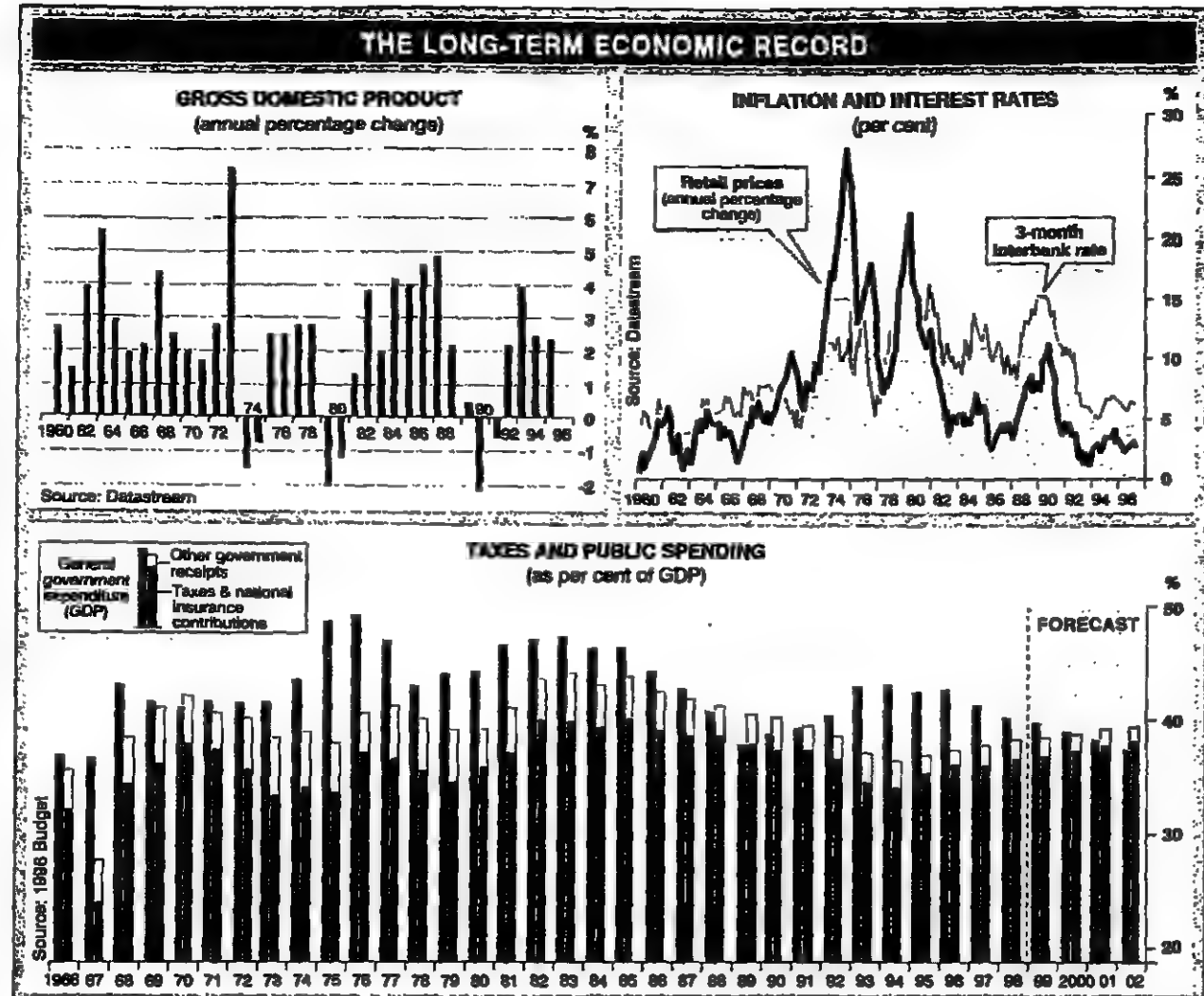
his earlier pledges to reduce the standard rate of income tax. By implication, therefore, the marriage allowance could be financed in the same way as the reductions in tax rates have been in the past — by whittling away other tax privileges or by raising indirect taxes. The right question to ask about the marriage allowance, therefore, is not where the money will come from, but whether a sound public purpose is served by modestly redistributing the burden of taxes from people who are married to those who are not.

In the past this question would generally have been answered in the affirmative. Marriage is a desirable social

institution, because it entails, by definition, a more explicit commitment than mere cohabitation to stay together and bring up children. It seems perfectly reasonable, therefore, that the tax system should recognise the marriage contract and should modestly favour marriage — as indeed the British tax system did until 1990 and the European and American systems still generally do.

In Britain today, however, such views are treated with a mixture of indignation and sneering contempt. As Mr Major found to his cost on Wednesday, after fending off all the questions about "where the money will come from", he faced another line of attack which used to be reserved for Tory campaigns against Labour: was the Government proposing to use taxes for "social engineering"? Was public money to be directed at non-economic objectives?

The answer to these questions should have been a clear "yes". There is nothing wrong with social engineering. It is what governments are elected to do, whether by providing education and health or by supporting the poor. Taxes and public spending exist to express social preferences, to achieve non-economic objectives and to override market forces. But such arguments have been forgotten after 18 years of free-market fundamentalism which elevated economics above politics and made an anathema of social policy. Mr Major, having shot himself in the foot on economics, may now want to move British politics beyond pocketbook issues. But his conversion has come too late.



Western firms tackle the last frontier

Sarah Cunningham in Moscow looks at moving into the Russian market

For a British company, tackling the Russian market for the first time is a nerve-racking experience. Everyone — up to and including, it seems, the Queen — recognises that it is an unusually dangerous place to do business.

When the Queen attended the official opening of a Boots building and was told the its healthcare arm was about to launch its Nurofen painkiller in Russia she reportedly asked: "presumably prompted by tales of the Russian mafia — whether this was not a risky matter."

The answer is that indeed it is. But according to Western businessmen working in Russia and in other republics within the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) the risks are as much to do with an underdeveloped distribution network, confusing tax and property laws, spiralling costs and late-paid bills as with organised crime.

However, the risks and high costs are not deterring Western companies. Mesmerised by the CIS's abundant natural resources and its 300 million consumers, with more than 140 million in Russia alone, they have poured in during the Nineties. Unleaver, which sells goods from Sunilk shampoo to Brooke Bond tea in the former Soviet Union, calls it "the largest untapped market in the world... the last frontier".

It also calls it "an unpredictable and difficult place to do business".

Arian Alkhani, an Englishman who runs two trading firms in Russia and has lived in Moscow for five years, says there were 30,000 Western residents, mainly diplomats, in Moscow when he arrived. Now there are more than 200,000, many of them businessmen.

Boots is spending £10 million on this week's Nurofen launch in St Petersburg and Moscow, which is much more than it would spend on a comparable launch in the West.

It believes that as the first branded ibuprofen painkiller to be sold in Russia, it will have an opportunity to get and keep market leadership. Advil, the leading US ibuprofen brand, is expected on the Russian market next year.

Experience shows, Boots says, that the first to arrive stays first in the market. Unilever, Smith Kline Beecham and Colgate have been attacking the East European toothpaste markets one by one. And in each case the first in has won.

Cost is now the biggest single barrier to entry in Russia, Mr Alkhani says. "The potential [for Boots] is good, but it will have to be prepared to spend a lot. You need deep pockets." Companies also need to find a good local partner, he says, something Boots, which has

tested the Russian market with throat lozenges, believes it has already done. His father, Masoud Alkhani, is chief executive of Middlesex Holdings, a company that has built up a range of interests in the CIS, from aluminium to financial services, and which floated on the London Stock Exchange last year.

The elder Mr Alkhani has been visiting Russia every few weeks for the past nine years and has been stunned by the rise in costs. He says: "A meal used to cost \$1, now it costs \$70 to \$80 a head. A flat in central Moscow was \$12,000, now it is \$350,000 to \$500,000."

An added cost for Western companies is paying for private security. It is normal and quite legal for groups of armed guards to be hired to protect warehouses, shops and offices and bodyguards are also widely used.

Murders of top Russian bankers and businessmen are frequent and although fewer foreigners are targeted, there have been enough incidents to make people who would never bother in London or New York depend on bodyguards in Moscow.

Masoud Alkhani never uses them and reckons that the gangster problem is exaggerated. He thinks that it was much worse earlier in the decade, just after the collapse of the

Soviet system. He thinks many of the criminals are moving into the business mainstream. "There aren't many Al Capones now," he says.

He admits, however, that he has turned down offers to become involved in Russian businesses where he suspects he would run up against the mafia. These include lotteries, casinos, and retail operations. Cigarette and alcohol distribution are also largely controlled by organised crime.

After the lifting of import restrictions, the black market for branded goods such as Levis and Rayban sunglasses is not what it was. But the enthusiasm for Western brands — from jeans to soap — has not died down. There is still a strong preference for foreign rather than locally made goods and they can command premium prices.

This, Boots likes to think, is where the company comes in. Barry Clare, managing director of Boots Healthcare International, says the company has no ambitions to sell to every Russian. The target market for ibuprofen is only two and three million people in Russia.

For the average person, Nurofen will cost the equivalent of about £2 for a pack of 12 — ten times the cost of a locally made painkiller. Only the wealthy will be able to afford Western cures for their Russian-produced headaches and hangovers.

“The potential is good, but you need deep pockets”

Jon Ashworth voices fears over anti-fraud proposals

Teamwork or dangerous liaisons?



Alcock: sent to prison for five years

The Conservatives have singled out crime in the City as a post-election target, but the weaponry they have in mind is questionable. The election manifesto pledges to bring forward a package of measures designed to modernise the current systems for dealing with City fraud.

New legislation would allow the Inland Revenue to pass confidential information to the police, the Serious Fraud Office (SFO) and other financial regulators to assist in the investigation of serious financial fraud.

Fine in principle, were it not for the case of Michael Alcock, the Inland Revenue investigator jailed for five years in February for taking kick-backs in his dealings with supposed tax evaders. Transcripts from his trial show the extent to which this sharing of information could be used to threaten individuals for personal gain.

Trial witnesses told how information was exchanged between the Stock Exchange surveillance division and the Inland Revenue's Special Office 2. In one instance, an anonymous property developer held a meeting with a Stock Exchange official in a pub in Oxford Circus, central London, and asked for help in "cutting a deal" with the Revenue over a £70,000 tax bill.

If the Stock Exchange were to intercede, the informant would blow

the whistle on an insider dealing ring that had allegedly netted several million pounds for the participants.

Alcock told the court that Alan Wilson, a member of the Stock Exchange insider dealing group, telephoned him to say that he had monitored some enormous share transactions, performed through Swiss companies and involving £650 million. Wilson had a contact who could identify who was behind the transactions, but the contact "had a tax problem" and wanted to know whether it could be "sorted out" in return for evidence.

The person behind the share transactions was "somebody prominent in the investment world". The approach was made in September 1989.

What the court did not hear was that the same month Richard Cook, Alcock's "right-hand man" at the Inland Revenue, rang John Gwyer, then head of tax investigations at Coopers & Lybrand, which acted for Asil Nadir, chairman of Polly Peck International.

Cook claimed to have obtained information from the Stock Exchange about alleged share-ramping of Polly Peck shares by Nadir, using offshore front companies. The tone was, settle up and none of this will come out. The approach took place a year before the SFO raid on South Audley Management (SAM),

which handled Nadir's private financial affairs.

Increasingly aggressive correspondence culminated in a meeting at Coopers & Lybrand in April 1990. Cook produced lists of transactions in Polly Peck shares and made vague references to people coming to London to collect cash. The upshot was: co-operate or we'll have the largest investigation ever imposed by the Inland Revenue.

In September 1990, the SFO launched its ill-fated dawn raid on the SAM offices. Shares in Polly Peck were swiftly suspended after losing more than half their value in one day.

The suspicion — and it is no more than that — is that the Stock Exchange tipped off the SFO, which blundered in without thinking through the consequences. The Nadir line is that Polly Peck would still be prospering were it not for the SFO raid. Others will recall Nadir's abortive share buyback, coupled with the subsequent discovery of a "black hole" in the Polly Peck accounts.

Whatever the mere suspicion that the sharing of information between regulators contributed to the collapse of a leading company, suggests the need for caution. The Revenue claims to have tightened its internal procedures, but the risk remains. A little knowledge is a dangerous thing.

The European Parliament announces that for procedural reasons it has reissued the call for tenders in connection with the furniture and artificial plants for the European Parliament Information Centre (library and ancillary services) in the Leopold Complex in Brussels, comprising counters, shelving, tables, seats, armchairs, shelves, drawer units and office accessories such as coat-stands, wastepaper baskets, trolleys etc...

The same announcement has already been published in English in The Times at the beginning of March 1997.

The deadline for the submission of tenders, initially set at 1 April 1997, has been put back to 16 May 1997.

The notice was sent to the Official Journal on 5 February 1997 and the notice correcting the deadline was sent on 25 March.

A visit to the site is set for 15 April 1997

Further information may be obtained from Mr Dino CANTOREGGI, Head of the Buildings Technical Management Division in Brussels, Fax (+32) (0) 2 2844966 quoting the reference 'Epicentre'.

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Shares slide in thin trading

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

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CHOICE 1

Mary Black sings from the heart during her only London concert

VENUE: Sunday at the Barbican Centre

CHOICE 2

Ricochet Dance Company performs a new work by Javier de Frutos

VENUE: Tomorrow at the Queen Elizabeth Hall

CHOICE 3

James MacMillan's Clarinet Concerto is given its world premiere

VENUE: Tonight at the Usher Hall, Edinburgh

POP 1

In praise of Luscious Jackson: four American girls who like their music scratchy, restless, honest — and loud

WEEKEND CHOICE

A daily guide to arts and entertainment compiled by Gillian Mailey

and Michael Duzek, piano, perform Brahms's Cello Sonata in F and Piano Trio in C minor, and Bach's Partita for solo violin

Blackheath Concert Hall, 23 Lee Road, SE20 (0181-481 0100) Sunday, 11.30pm

ELSEWHERE

BELFAST Dmitry Sitkovetsky conducts the Ulster Orchestra in Mendelssohn's overture to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Shostakovich's *Phantasia* and Beethoven's *Piano Concerto No. 1*

Ulster Hall, Bedford Street (01232 233340) Tonight, 7.45pm

BLACKPOOL The Shubert Theatre presents a new work by a new composer, *Phantasia*, performed to a composition by Graham Fitch

Ulster Hall, Bedford Street (01232 233340) Tomorrow, 8pm

EDINBURGH Ensemble Vivaldi, Oboe, violin, Jane Sinton, cello

THEATRE GUIDE

Jeremy Kingston's assessment of theatre showing in London

House full, returns only

Seeds at all prices

season. Gabriella Drake plays the woman with a past, Rebecca Johnson the victim who is without a mother

THEATRE GUIDE

season. Gabriella Drake plays the woman with a past, Rebecca Johnson the victim who is without a mother

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THEATRE GUIDE



"In New York, you're allowed to make as much noise as you like," say Luscious Jackson. So that's all right, then

Meet grown-up spice

They came from New York to shatter every illusion about the woman-pop thing. They are Luscious Jackson

Human beings are shaped by the land they live on. For Eskimos, language seems to be little more than an oral filing system for different types of snow. The Australian accent, the harsh open spaces and small population caused conversation to be brisk in tone, but slow in tempo. And the copious number of flies meant that one had to talk through gritted teeth.

So it comes as no surprise that the great cities of the world should influence the music that is made within their ring-roads. Luscious Jackson are the sound of New York in all its cross-cultural, life-affirming glory. Gabby Jackson, the band's singer and guitarist, has it taped: "Proper coffee: stores that are open at four in the morning selling hot bagels; bumping into people you haven't seen for a while and ending up at a house party at seven in the morning with them. Second-hand stores selling cute denim jackets for \$9 that smell like someone's died in them. People on roller skates reading *The Wall Street Journal*. Walking through Greenwich Village and hearing jazz from one open window, breakfast

that girls could do hip-hop and pop. 'Yeah, there seems to be general surprise that our wombs don't get in the way of our guitars'." Glaser says. "Although I've noticed that a lot of people stopped acting quite so strange about Kate being a drummer when she made it clear that she was a lesbian. It was like, 'Ah-ha! That explains that whole woman-drumming thing — she's a lesbian.' Like that, more important than the fact that she used to drum for the Beastie Boys."

"People like that amuse me now," Schellenbach says. "I can spend an hour after they've gone repeating all the dumb things they've said and howling with laughter. It's the same when we get invited to parties. We're quite a cool band, but no one knows what we look like. So you might meet someone over the buffet who'll be totally rude and blank you. An hour later, when you're introduced to them, they'll be so revilingly friendly. Not that we're cynical."

All of Luscious Jackson cackle cynically.

The single *Naked Eye* is released by Grand Royal records on Monday. *Fever In Fever Out* follows on April 13



CAITLIN MORAN

hand, appears to have found perfect love: "Laughing and dancing 'til the sun comes out/Then later, when we're lying together/Even our stomachs are speaking to each other."

Nearly every tune is giddy with pristine harmonies and that distinctive tang of genius. It's hard to believe that, when Luscious Jackson first emerged, many critics expressed thinly veiled surprise

Gypsy passions

WILD and untamed, Taraf de Haidouks come from a tiny gypsy village in Romania. For years they played at local festivals but since the downfall of communism they have been storming the concert platforms of Western Europe. Hugely popular in France and Belgium, the 12-strong troupe were making their first visit to London and their stomping performance full of dark passion sent a capacity audience home in joyous mood.

WORLD MUSIC

Taraf de Haidouks Barbican

Taraf range in age from 77 to 19. At the start the full ensemble is shambolic, and barely in tune. This is apparently par for the course: they are accustomed to playing all night and the first few numbers are little more than a warm-up. Things improve dramatically when they break down into smaller combinations, allowing each of five violinists the spotlight. None of them can read or write but their musical virtuosity is phenomenal: the melodies are complex and the improvised solos are taken at breakneck speed as each attempts to surpass the others.

This is music from deep within the gypsy soul. The heartbeats come from the cimbalom, an East European dulcimer that is hammered with gusto, providing a shifting but insistent rhythm. The line-up is completed by a plucked double bass and a pair of accordions. The vocals are high and intense, ranging from the plaintive *Cintec de Suparare Tiganes* (Sad Gypsy Song) to *Ballada Conducatorului* (Ballad of the Dictator), sung in an ancient gurgling delivery to a traditional tune with words mocking the fallen tyrant Ceausescu.

The faster songs are full of mischief, celebrating the traditional gypsy life. By the time the full group are reunited for the finale, rivalries are forgotten and they are on fire as one. Taraf de Haidouks are an earthy, living treasure — eccentric, humorous and exhausting. It is hard to think of anything else quite like them.

NIGEL WILLIAMSON

ART GALLERIES

PARSON GALLERY 19 Mar-19 Apr
Theodore Roszak, "Theatrical
Exhibition" Times, 11 Notting Hill
SW1 0171 235 8144

OPERA & BALLET

COLISEUM 0171 830 0300 (24hr)
ENGLISH NATIONAL OPERA
Tonight 8.00
ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE
Tonight 7.30 MADAM BUTTERFLY
Tonight 8.00

THEATRES

THE ROYAL OPERA
Tonight 7.00, Tue 7.30, Sat 8.00
Tonight, Tue 7.30, Sat 8.00
Tonight, Tue 7.30, Sat 8.00

DANCE

BADLEY'S WELLS 118
PENCKOCK THEATRE
Tonight 8.00
Tonight 8.00
Tonight 8.00

THEATRES

ADRIAN LLOYD WEBSTER'S
SUNSET
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POP 2

How Supergrass were transformed from lightweight Britpoppers to heavyweight rock'n'rollers



POP 3

Their new album proves that the Chemical Brothers are shaping up to be one of the great acts of the 1990s

THE TIMES POP ARTS



POP 4

The Australian rockers INXS do themselves no favours with their latest release, *Elegantly Wasted*



POP 5

Gorky's Zygotic Mynci win the award for most difficult album of the year to pigeon-hole

It's alright to get serious, lads

Of the key Britpop bands, Supergrass were always the jokers in the pack. Lighter than Oasis, brighter than Blur and pithier than Pulp, they made it all look so easy. Their exuberant hit single, *Alright*, became a defining anthem of youth in the summer of 1995. A song about zooming around on bikes and going down to the pub for the first time, it had an accompanying video which seemed to suggest that three likely lads from Oxford had tumbled into the world of pop almost by accident. And while their first album, *I Should Coco*, which soared to the top of the chart at about the same time, embraced a variety of musical settings and moods, the perception of the group as a bunch of carefree squawks quickly became fixed in the public mind.

Which is why the sound and look of the new Supergrass single and video, *Richard III*, is such an eye-opener. A better of a song, it zones in with all the precision of a heat-seeking missile on a mood of frustration and alienation. In the accompanying video, Supergrass now look like the premier league, heavyweight rock'n'roll stars that they are, and at one point in the action, bassist Micky Quinn ends up flat on the floor with blood trickling from his nose.

"We've been away for about a year, and we didn't want to creep back in," Quinn says. "We wanted to give people a bit of a slap around the face. Basically, we didn't want to make another *Alright*, which would simply have reinforced that happy-go-lucky image people have got of us, although we would probably sell a lot more records if we had."

Whether the world is ready to accept the new, hard-hitting Supergrass remains to be seen. Their American record company has declined to release *Richard III*, opting instead for a different song, *Cheapskate*, which is why the group are now ensconced in a studio warehouse in East London, making another video to be used exclusively in the United States. The setting for this one is inspired by a scene in the Al Pacino movie *Scarface*, and

David Sinclair discovers a new heavyweight image being brewed by that ebullient trio, Supergrass

features the band dressed up as gangsters, playing the song in a living room dominated by a palm-tree mural. They have just spent two hours videoing a mouse scurrying along a ventilator shaft, a sequence that will eventually make an intro lasting all of two seconds.

"Should have been a big, dirty rat," says singer Gaz Coombes, resplendent in a white, three-piece suit. "I'm disappointed the Americans went for a different song." Quinn says. "Basically, they want to get us on the radio there and *Cheapskate* has more the feel they want. But I still think it's a dodgy thing to happen."

This is a rare moment of complaint. For while the Damons, Jarvis and Nels of the pop world are happy to air their grievances, often pouring out their innermost feelings at the drop of a hat, Supergrass have no such inclinations. "Journalists are usually after more than we can give them," Quinn admits. "We just don't feel the need to get too involved in analysing everything."

"Being in a band is supposed to be fun and basically a way of not having to get a proper job," says drummer Danny Goffey, who is recovering from a mottled haircut that went disastrously wrong. Shorn to the scalp, he now looks like a promoter-cum-spiv of vaguely Mediterranean extraction. "Our songs don't really have any strong meaning," he casually insists.

There is a lot of hanging around on video shoots, and most bands say they hate doing them. Goffey, who is expecting the arrival at any moment

of his partner, her daughter and their six-month old son, is bored and impatient to get on with things. But they all say they enjoy making videos, and maintain a generally relaxed attitude while a mob of technicians scurry around.

They will have a lot more of this sort of thing to do if at some point they take up Steven Spielberg's offer to make them stars of their own American TV series. At the moment the idea has been put on ice while Supergrass establish their identity as a group in America, but they are flattered to have attracted the attention of such a prominent movie mogul.

Both *Richard III* and *Cheapskate* are lifted from Supergrass's forthcoming second album, *In It for the Money*. While retaining the vigour and sparkly appeal of their earlier work, it marks a giant step forward. Certainly, the group's British record company has pinned an awful lot of hope on its success, especially given the drastically reduced sales of the recently released album by one of their other major clients, Blur.

Whereas Blur have taken a dramatic, self-conscious lurch away from the British pop mainstream and into the murkier waters of American garageband rock, Supergrass have made a much more subtle reappraisal of their musical goals. More complex and ambitious than their first album, and certainly more rock than pop, *In It for the Money* was nevertheless recorded on about the same budget as their debut, and at the same studio in Cornwall. The big difference is that this time the group produced it themselves.

"With nobody peering over our shoulder, we didn't let anything hold us back," Coombes says. "So we would develop a wacky idea and just go for it. Sometimes it's good to trash a song, kick it around a bit, and see if it survives."

Supergrass appear on TFI Friday on Channel 5 at 6pm tonight. The single *Richard III* is out now on Parlophone. The album *In It for the Money* is released on April 21. Their UK tour begins at Manchester Apollo on May 2 and ends at Bristol Academy on May 14.



The reborn Supergrass in person: Danny Goffey (left) and Gaz Coombes with Micky Quinn behind

JAZZ ALBUMS

Tearing it up, but gently

RON MILES

Woman's Day (Gramavision GCD 79516, £14.99)

LIKE the music of guitarist Bill Frisell, who is heavily featured on this album, and in whose quartet trumpeter Ron Miles has played for the past two years, *Woman's Day* assimilates a wide variety of contemporary styles without a hint of contrivance. Thus softly swinging quartet pieces setting Miles's gentle, plangent trumpet against Frisell's guitar are interspersed with the odd sweet country-flavoured ballad, and occasional bursts of harshly abrasive rock. The multi-textured, adventurous music that results consistently achieves Miles's aim "to produce music that is exciting without that obvious tearing-it-up approach".

CHARLES MINGUS

Mingus Plays Piano (Impulse! IMP 12172, £8.99)

TIME was, in the days of vinyl, when "serious" jazz fans — those into John Coltrane, Charles Mingus, Pharoah Sanders and their like — could be immediately identified by the number of distinctive orange-and-black Impulse! spines their record racks contained. Now this same shibboleth can be applied to CD collections, thanks to an extensive reissue programme of classic recordings on the label from the 1960s and early 1970s — Sonny Rollins's *Alfie*, Alice Coltrane's *Journey in Satchidananda*, Benny Carter's *Further Definitions* among them — all in highly collectable facsimiles of the original sleeves. *Mingus Plays Piano* in many ways typifies the label's artistic policy: Charles Mingus is a wonderfully eccentric pianist, and it is to Impulse!'s credit that it elicited this unique solo gem from the legendary bassist/composer.

CHRIS PARKER

The beat and nothing but the beat

POP ALBUMS: The Chemical

Brothers are rebuilding rock, and the result is a millennial blast

THE CHEMICAL BROTHERS

Dig Your Own Hole (Freestyle/Dust/Virgin 7243 8 42950, £13.99)

WITH their new single, *Block Rockin' Beats*, providing eloquent proof that they can stroll to the top of the chart with or without the help of Noel Gallagher, it is clear that the Chemical Brothers are shaping up to be one of the touchstone acts of the 1990s. Their second album, *Dig Your Own Hole*, is certainly the stuff of which watersheds are made.

As on the previous outing, *Exit Planet Dust*, conventional notions of melody and song structure are brusquely rejected. Apart from Gallagher's woody vocal on *Setting Sun*, and a stretch of folkly warbling by Beth Orton at the start of the neo-psychedelic *Where Do I Begin*, there is no singing.

Instead, *Dig Your Own Hole* offers a millennial, club/rock celebration of the beat, the whole beat and virtually nothing but the beat. Not the monotonously reg-

mented, Kraftwerk-derived beats that have dominated the house and techno scene since the late 1980s, but an exhilarating, rocked-up version of the syncretised rhythms beloved of jazz fusionists such as Herbie Hancock (*Black Rockin' Beats*), hip hop pioneers such as Grandmaster Melle Mel (*Lost In The K-Hole*) and the inventor of funk, Mr James Brown himself (*Get Up On It Like This*).

Adorned with little more than a bass line, fragments of rap and various scratch and shatter sound effects that explode like depth charges in the guts of the arrangements, these charming rhythm tracks burst out of the speakers like dogs in pursuit of a mechanical hare.

Combining studio and turntable techniques that the original rock'n'rollers could not have dreamt of, with a calculated style of musical barbarism, the Chemical Brothers are rebuilding rock from its rhythmic foundations up. The effect is a rigorously uncompromising album which is

going to scorch a mark on the music scene of 1997 like a nuclear burn.

INXS *Elegantly Wasted* (Mercury 534 613, £13.99)

TWENTY years since they started playing local pubs in Australian mining towns, the same six men who still comprise INXS have managed the transition to middle-aged stardom in surprisingly good order. While one would imagine that their continued success is more a triumph of application than of inspiration, their last two albums produced many moments to treasure, and they ought, theoretically, to be well placed to capitalise on the current mood of the market with their classic dance/rock crossover sound.

However, they do themselves no favours with the dull

sloganeering of this album's title track, one of several songs, including the sketchy *Girl On Fire* and pretentious *She Is Rising*, that sound too much like INXS-by-numbers for comfort.

Of the more melodically developed songs, *Searching* uncovers a tender, almost pleading tone in Michael Hutchence's voice, while the pounding *Shake The Tree* is one of several passages of high drama. But although they strike all the familiar musical poses this album has a hollow ring. Rather like its decadently self-regarding title, *Elegantly Wasted* lacks soul.

CDs reviewed in *The Times* can be ordered from the Times Music Shop on 0345 023493.

GORKY'S ZYGOTIC MYNCI

Barafundle (Fontana 534 769, £13.99)

GORKY'S Zygotic Mynci are the Welsh band who have built an impressive word-of-mouth reputation, considering no one knows how to pronounce their name. Their fourth album, *Barafundle*, wins the most-difficult-to-pigeonhole collection of the year award by a mile.

A combination of primarily acoustic musical textures, intricate harmonies and obscure Welsh whimsy, tracks such as *Sometimes The Father Is The Son* and *Miniature Kingdoms* have a quaint pastoral charm. An intriguing sense of old-world otherness is bolstered by devices such as a three-piece shawm (medieval oboe) section on *Starmoonsun* and "monk voices" on *Pen Gwag Glas*. At the same time, their inability to play through a song without introducing a sudden time or tempo change recalls the irritating working practices, if not the precise sound, of prog-rock hippie

outfits such as Caravan and Gentle Giant. Crazy name, crazy guys.

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Basquiat — Original Soundtrack (Island 524 260, £15.49)

APART from David Bowie's sensational performance in the role of Andy Warhol, the best thing about the movie biography of the artist Jean-Michel Basquiat is the soundtrack. With numbers by John Cale (*Hallelujah*), Tom Waits (*Tom Waits's Blues*), PJ Harvey (a specially recorded *Is That All There Is?*), Them (*It's All Over Now, Baby Blue*) and many others, it is a tremendously evocative compendium. Unfortunately, the Rolling Stones number, *Beat Of Burden*, which is played just as Courtney Love makes her devil woman entrance in the film, is one of several tracks which are missing. Whatever the reason, an otherwise great album is diminished.

DAVID SINCLAIR

Ry Cooder says it was the best musical experience of his life and rumour has it that Phil Collins is on the way. While the Americans tighten the noose of the trade blockade on Cuba, the rhythms of salsa have suddenly made Havana the fashionable place for rock musicians to hang out and record.

Cooder is rhapsodic about recording with Cuban musicians on his new album, *Buena Vista Social Club*, his first since the Grammy award-winning *Talking Timbuktu*. "This is the best thing I was ever involved in," he says without hesitation.

Something of a legend himself, Cooder seems almost awe-struck to share the spotlight with a cast-list of legendary Cuban veterans who practically invented the exotic rhythms of son and rumba, mambo and salsa. They include Compay Segundo, an 89-year-old guitarist and composer whom Cooder describes simply as "the source," and Ruben Gonzalez, 77, "the greatest piano soloist I have ever heard in my life." Both men will make their first visits to Britain this summer.

Rolling their own in Havana

WORLD MUSIC: Nigel Williamson on Ry Cooder's Cuban mission



Men in hats: Compay Segundo shows Ry Cooder the way

"Cuban musicians are unique," says Cooder. "The organisation of the musical group is perfectly understood, there is no ego, no jockeying for position."

This lack of ego led to three extraordinary albums being recorded inside two weeks in Havana last March. In addition to his own recording, Cooder guests on the Afro-Cuban All Stars album, a recreation of the big band sound of the "golden era" of the 1940s and 1950s. And he also encouraged Ruben Gonzalez to make his debut solo album, more than half a century after the pianist first entered a recording studio with the great band leader Arsenio Rodriguez.

A quietly spoken, modest man, Gonzalez did not even own a piano when he was

piano and I had to play it. Then someone turned up the lights and I thought they wanted me to go because I was interrupting. But they asked me to stay."

Compay Segundo, the other star of Cooder's Havana sessions, is the ultimate living legend. The composer of hundreds of classic Cuban songs, two years ago he struck a new European recording deal, possibly the oldest act ever to be signed to a major label. Between Cooder and Segundo there exists a special chemistry, bordering on reverence. "Compay is the last of the best," says the younger man. "As soon as he walked into the studio it all kicked in. He was the leader, the fulcrum. He knew the best songs and how to do them." Segundo could easily have

made a fortune in America or Europe. Top salsa stars such as Willie Colon have recorded his songs — yet he receives not a cent in royalties because of the American blockade. "But I would never leave Cuba. Here there is tranquillity, you can do whatever you want. Why would I want to go anywhere else?"

Yet Cuban music is changing and Segundo and Gonzalez may be the last of a dying breed. Miami is only half an hour away and despite the blockade the American influence is huge. Juan d'Marcos, 42, who leads Cuba's top son band Sierra Maestra and who put together the Afro-Cuban All Stars, says: "Son has fused with a Cuban version of rap music and it is very poor quality, badly written, disordered and aggressive. I think Cuban music is in crisis."

Sooner or later, culturally something is certain to be lost.

Cooder is simply grateful that he got there before it is too late. "Music is a treasure hunt," he says. "You dig and dig and you find traces. But there I found it all."

● A Toda Cuba. Le Gusta by the Afro-Cuban All Stars is out now. Introducing Ruben Gonzalez is released on May 12. Buena Vista Social Club is released on June 9 (all on World Circuit). The Afro-Cuban All Stars and Ruben Gonzalez, begin their UK tour tomorrow at Watermans Arts Centre, Brentford (0181-568 1176)

PREVIEWS FROM 18 APRIL
PATTI LORRONE
MASTER CLASS
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TOP TEN ALBUMS

1	(1)	Spice	Spice Girls (Virgin)
2	(2)	Wet Wet Wet	Wet Wet Wet (Precious Organisation)
3	(3)	Tragic Kingdom	No Doubt (Interscope)
4	(4)	Lisa Stansfield	Lisa Stansfield (Arista)
5	(5)	Still Waters	Bee Gees (Polydor)
6	(6)	Everything Must Go	Manic Street Preachers (Epic)
7	(7)	Blue Is the Colour	Beautiful South (Gel Discs)
8	(8)	Ocean Drive	Lighthouse Family (Wild Card)
9	(9)	Pop	U2 (Island)
10	(10)	Glow	Reef (Sony S2)

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Figure in brackets denotes last week's position

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CHANGING TIMES



TELEVISION

Shakespeare for the people: two professionals and a whole estate of amateurs tackle *Macbeth*



THEATRE

Screen violence comes under the spotlight in Ben Elton's gripping play, *Popcorn*, now in the West End

THE TIMES ARTS



TOMORROW

A thousand days to go before the millennium, but is Britain already slipping behind the clock?



MONDAY

Special guest Ike Turner joins Joe Louis Walker at the Shepherds Bush Empire: we review the gig

TELEVISION: Eve-Ann Prentice on how the residents of a Birmingham housing estate came to perform *Macbeth*

Getting into toil and trouble

A gang of marauding thugs on a hell-hole council estate bundle the beaten-up head of a rival gang into a car, pour petrol on him and hurl a burning rag in through the car window.

Shortly afterwards, the micro-skirted wife of one of the vicious gangsters eggs on her bruise-knuckled and tattooed husband to challenge his boss and rule the estate himself.

The setting for this play, to be broadcast on BBC2 tomorrow night, is vile — a nightmare inner-city sprawl of broken windows and derelict land, peopled by anarchic louts whose only hope of higher things is the National Lottery and the ability to wield a baseball bat with skull-smashing ferocity.

The script is tough and powerful, yet it has been familiar to theatre-

It's not heavyweight violence. I thought it would be like *Reservoir Dogs*

goers for hundreds of years. For the play is *Macbeth*, and it was filmed on the Ladywood housing estate in Birmingham last summer, with a multiracial cast including 130 local residents who worked alongside professional actors. This is Shakespeare of the people, for the people, by the people.

Macbeth on the Estate keeps Shakespeare's words — albeit heavily pruned — but shifts the power struggle to a modern world where Duncan is a lager-swilling estate godfather who controls the locals with a gang of thugs led by Macbeth and Banquo. There are no witches, but three spooky children make the prediction that Macbeth will take Duncan's place, sparking the blood-letting.

The professional actors are led by James Frain of *Murder on the Nile* fame, and Susan Vidler, late of *Trainspotting* and *Naked*. Their portrayal of a jeans-clad Macbeth and his Lycra-laced wife are powerful and strangely empathic. But what like the play into the realm of the memorable are the performances by the locals. These range from the young, old, black and white, whose faces mirror the horror of the power struggle evolving around them, to key roles played by unmarried mother Patsi Fox as Lady Macduff (with her real



Patsi Fox (Lady Macduff) with 19-month-old Paige: some residents feared the film would give the estate a false reputation for violence, but the BBC stressed that it was chosen because of its "peaceful atmosphere"

daughter Paige as her stage daughter, and van driver Martin O'Brien as Seyton.

What makes the play even more remarkable is that most of the Ladywood estate tenants who took part were totally ignorant of the Bard's works before filming began.

Macbeth on the Estate is the brainchild of the documentary-maker Penny Woolcock, who gained her first experience of making television programmes only in her thirties, after a teenage pregnancy and a tough early life. The script has been heavily cut, but the clever use of modern images helps to provide possible

explanations for some mystifying aspects of Shakespeare's original. Why does the coolly calculating Lady Macbeth suddenly become unhinged? Woolcock uses images of an empty nursery to imply that Macbeth's wife is grieving for a dead baby and that the murders of Macduff's wife and his children were too much for her.

This latest venture marks Woolcock's debut in the field of drama, and is the natural offspring of her award-winning 1994 documentary, *Shakespeare on the Estate*, which featured local people performing extracts.

Most of the play was filmed in

and around Cavell House, a derelict block of flats on the Ladywood estate, and in the nearby Pied Piper public house. The making of the play initially caused friction between the locals taking part and some residents who feared it would give the area a false reputation for violence. The BBC has been at pains to stress that the estate was chosen because of Ladywood's "peaceful atmosphere and community spirit". Ladywood, which has Clare Short as its MP, is currently undergoing a £40 million regeneration programme.

Patsi Fox, 28, had never read or heard a line of Shakespeare before

the play was filmed. "I like the way Penny [Woolcock] has done it. I don't like the old way; it is too old-fashioned," she said last week as she and her partner, Patrick, were preparing to move from Ladywood to a new home in Winslow Green. It was not the language which caused her the most difficulty, but singing *Will Survive* in the pub at 7am in a scene depicting the wake following Duncan's murder.

Her 19-month-old daughter was not distressed by the violence in many scenes, she says, although there were real tears, captured on screen, when her mother fell to the floor after being felled in the play.

"But it is not heavyweight violence," says Fox. "I thought it would be like *Reservoir Dogs*."

Now Fox hopes to become an actress: "It's a secret ambition of mine. I could quite easily slot into that way of life. I find it very easy and natural. The best part of making the play for me was the experience of working with proper actors, the producer and the director — they can't take that experience away from me."

O'Brien, 32, was so bored by the little Shakespeare he learnt at school that he opted to make props for the school drama department rather than take part. With *Mac-*

beth on the Estate, he "loved every minute of it". Now he is looking for an agent in the hope of pursuing a full-time acting career. "This has really whetted my appetite for acting and for Shakespeare," he says. "I find the language very rich, it explains everything perfectly, and today's language is so boring in comparison."

One television which will definitely be tuned in tomorrow night is more used to showing National Lottery draws and football matches — the set over the bar at the Pied Piper.

● *Macbeth on the Estate* is on BBC2 at 10.30pm tomorrow

IF COLOURED lighting is needed to bring in the masses, then so be it. However, although I found the lighting plot for the Smith Quartet's New Works programme neither helpful nor distracting, it did not help to fill the hall.

Why it should be thought necessary to amplify a string quartet in the Purcell Room is another mystery — other ensembles seem to manage without — but this, too, is part of the show. In three of the four pieces heard it added nothing, save for the inevitable distant hum and the odd crackle. Would that some of the razz-matazz had, indeed, enhanced some of the rather uninspiring fare on offer.

Kevin Volans's *Hunting: Gathering* was particularly arid. Consisting of three movements, called *Expeditions*, the work is conceived as an unplanned journey. Musical fragments are presented in abundance "strung together in a pseudo-narrative". The second expedition, for example, begins with motifs redolent of

Chance to shine wasted

CONCERT

Smith Quartet
Purcell Room

the Italian Baroque concerto, but they eventually give way to much thrumming of repeated notes, never to return. An unplanned journey is one thing; a purposeless one quite another.

Simon Emmerson's *Fields of Attraction*, receiving its first performance, seemed more worth the effort and was certainly more coherent. It also featured some novel sonorities produced by sliding

on the string. Steven Mackey's *Great Crossing, Great Divide* was commissioned by Netherlands Radio for the Smith Quartet, to be performed as an encore at the Great Crossing Festival in Amsterdam. More weighty than an encore piece might suggest, nevertheless, it barely registers in its three minutes.

Best of the bunch was the String Quartet No 3 (*Le Miroir*) by the Belgian composer, Walter Hus. The second movement, *Reflet*, continues, in varied form, the vigorous and impressive contrapuntal discourse of the first movement's central section. The first movement, *Miroir I*, begins and ends with the kind of crazy distortions you might expect in a seaside house of mirrors. But the tortured harmonies of the third movement and equally austere finale are anything but a frolic. Hus's latest quartet is serious business.

BARRY MILLINGTON

Deep in the dark heart of Hollywood

THEATRE

Popcorn
Apollo

Four years ago a gang in Manchester tortured a girl and set her on fire, repeating a phrase from *Child's Play*: "I'm Chucky — wanna play?" It is possible that one of Jamie Bulger's killers had seen the same film and the same demonic doll. I imagine that Quentin Tarantino and Oliver Stone would regard horror flicks like that as irretrievably crude, yet *Reservoir Dogs* and *Natural Born Killers* raise rather similar worries. In their cool, stylish way, don't they slip into that part of the mind where scruple resides and leave just a few brain cells twisted out of shape before making their exit?

That's only one of several questions Ben Elton asks about America and, to a lesser extent, Britain in his stimulating, gripping new play, and maybe it is not the most important.

He touches on obsession with celebrity, the power of the media and, above all, people's passion for blaming others for the wrongs they perpetrate as well as those they suffer. *Popcorn* ends with a Jacobean body count for which no modern-day Hamlet or Iago takes responsibility. I don't think I'm betraying secrets if I reveal that counterparts of Horatio, the Polish estate, the Elsinore social services and the Danish state are all being sued as the curtain falls.

Why? You can discover either by reading the novel *Popcorn*, which is more wide-ranging and elaborate, or by seeing the play Elton wrote at the same time, which is more powerful. After all, the theatre forces you to keep watching the chic young director Bruce

a key contribution to culture; but he comes into his own when fear and anger are needed. Rightly, his Bruce reserves true horror for his captors' direct threat: that he help them to escape the electric chair by confessing on live TV that his movies inspired their mayhem.

Elton has come far as a dramatist since his *Gasp and Poor Cow*, and makes the debate that ensues a perfectly logical happening. The only objection is that some of the content — Wayne's "I'm your profit, you exploit my sickness" — is less trailer-part talk than Elton earnestness. But though it occasionally embraces caricature, *Popcorn* is a subtler, more textured piece than it might seem. For instance, Wayne, with his dopey patriotism, and Scout, with her dim propriety, are indeed rather similar to the banal thugs you find in *Reservoir Dogs* and *Pulp Fiction*. Maybe Bruce is

merely passing one kind of buck in order to make another, or maybe his films do tell truths about America, or maybe a bit of both. Good for Ben

Elton for giving us tough subjects to chew.

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE

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Labour's gang of 2 waiting and hoping in the shadows

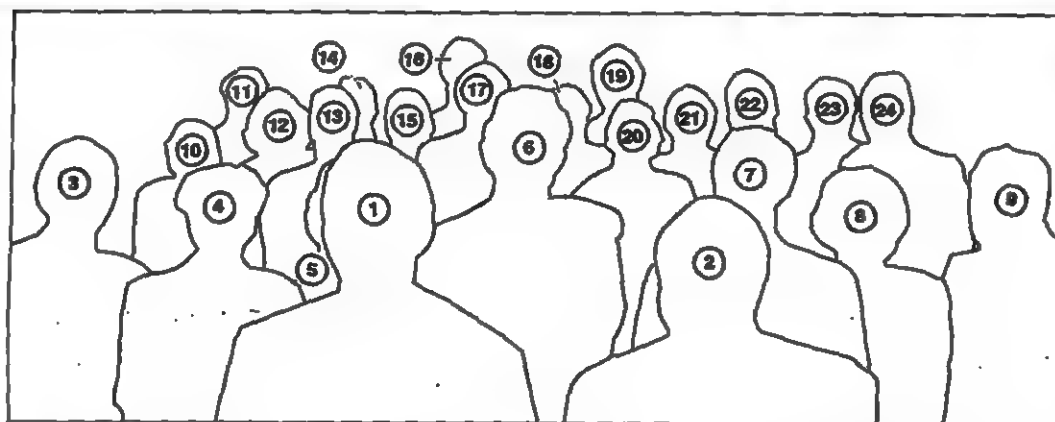
Britain

THE TIMES LABOUR MANIFESTO



Labour's gang of 24 waiting and hoping in the shadows

- 1: TONY BLAIR, 43, Labour leader, undisputed master of his party but no experience of government.
- 2: JOHN PRESCOTT, 59, deputy Labour leader, a turbulent and rumbustious figure who will have a key Cabinet role. May have an overlord role ruling the regions, environment and industry.
- 3: JACK STRAW, 50, Home Office: a moderniser and key Blairite who will be rewarded for his loyalty.
- 4: ANN TAYLOR, 49, Leader of the House, may switch to become the first woman Chief Whip after winning plaudits for her handling of the Nolan report.
- 5: DAVID BLUNKETT, 49 (hidden behind Mr Blair), Education and Employment: the star of the past 18 months who has transformed policy without tearing the party apart.
- 6: GORDON BROWN, 48, Shadow Chancellor: the second most powerful man in a Blair government as occupant of Number 11.
- 7: ROBIN COOK, 51, Foreign Office: standard-bearer of the left. He will be Blair's Foreign Secretary and the candidate of the left in any



- future leadership contest.
- 8: MARGARET BECKETT, 54, Trade and Industry: once on the fringes, now back in favour.
- 9: FRANK DOBSON, 57, Environment: despite having laughed at all Blair's jokes at manifesto launch yesterday his future looks uncertain.
- 10: MARJORIE MOWLAM, 47, Northern Ireland: a moderniser who has earned respect for her handling of a notoriously sensitive portfolio.
- 11: CHRIS SMITH, 45, Health: stock declining after constant losing battles over finance.
- 12: DONALD DEWAR, 59, Chief Whip: a member of the inner-circle destined for high office at the very heart of a Blair Cabinet.
- 13: HARRIET HARMAN, 46, Social

- Security: on the way down having never recovered from the fiasco of her choice of children's schools.
- 14: JACK CUNNINGHAM, 59, Heritage: one of the few to have had experience of government.
- 15: ALISTAIR DARLING, Chief Secretary to Treasury: highly regarded, poised for advancement.
- 16: CLARE SHORT, 51, Overseas Development: rehabilitated after being reunited with her long-lost adopted son. May head new International Development department.
- 17: RON DAVIES, 50, Wales: gaffe-prone, but skilfully handled bitter arguments in Welsh party over devolution.
- 18: GEORGE ROBERTSON, 49, Scotland: will be rewarded for taking the flak over internal rows in Labour Party over referendum on devolution.
- 19: GAVIN STRANG, 53, Agriculture: one of only four members of the Shadow Cabinet to have held ministerial office in the last Labour government. Expected casualty of first reshuffle.
- 20: TOM CLARKE, 58, Disabled Rights: has read the runes and already suggested he would be prepared to take a Minister of State role.
- 21: DAVID CLARK, 57, Defence: grey, safe, but completely dull. Unlikely to rise further than his current brief.
- 22: DEREK FOSTER, 59, Duchy of Lancaster: was given the job as the price for giving up Chief Whip's job. Speculation he could be looked upstage to the Lords.
- 23: MICHAEL MEACHER, 57, Environmental Protection: untested, constructed old Left and early favourite for demotion.
- 24: ANDREW SMITH, 48, Transport: the unassuming face of Blairism who is a safe pair of hands in the driving seat.

■ A fresh start ■ A party transformed ■ Build a modern welfare state ■ Lead reform in Europe

Britain can and must do better

I believe in Britain. It is a great country with a great history. The British people are a great people. But I believe Britain can and must be better: better schools, better hospitals, better ways of tackling crime, of building a modern welfare state, of equipping ourselves for a new world economy.

I want a Britain that is one nation, with shared values and purpose, where merit comes before privilege, run for the many not the few, strong and sure of itself at home and abroad.

I want a Britain that does not shuffle into the new millennium afraid of the future, but strides into it with confidence.

I want to renew our country's faith in the ability of its government and politics to deliver this new Britain. I want to do it by making a limited set of important promises and achieving them. This is the purpose of the bond of trust I set out at the end of this introduction, in which ten specific commitments are put before you. Hold us to them. They are our covenant with you.

I want to renew faith in politics by being honest about the last 18 years. Some things the Conservatives got right. We will not change them. It is where they got things wrong that we will make change. We have no intention or desire to replace one set of dogmas by another.

I want to renew faith in politics through a government that will govern in the interest of the many, the broad majority of people who work hard, pay by the rules, pay their dues and feel let down by a political system that gives the breaks to the few, to an elite at the top increasingly out of touch with the rest of us.

And I want, above all, to govern in a way that brings our country together, that unites our nation in facing the tough and dangerous

challenges of the new economy and changed society in which we must live. I want a Britain which we all feel part of, in whose future we all have a stake, in which what I want for my own children I want for yours.

■ A new politics

The reason for having created new Labour is to meet the challenges of a different world. The millennium symbolises a new era opening up for Britain. I am confident about our future prosperity, even optimistic, if we have the courage to change and use it to build a better Britain.

To accomplish this means more than just a change of government. Our aim is no less than to set British political life on a new course for the future.

People are cynical about politics and distrustful of political promises. That is hardly surprising. There have been few more gross breaches of faith than when the Conservatives under Mr Major promised, before the election of 1992, that they would not raise taxes, and then went on to raise them by the largest amount in peacetime history starting in the first Budget after the election. The Exchange Rate Mechanism as the cornerstone of economic policy. Europe, health, crime, schools, the broken promises are strewn across the country's memory.

The Conservatives' broken promises taint all politics. That is why we have made it our guiding rule not to promise what we cannot deliver, and to deliver what we promise. What follows is not the politics of a 100 days that dazzles for a time, then fizzles out. It is not the politics of a revolution, but of a fresh start, the patient rebuilding and renewing of this country — renewal that can take root and build over time.

That is one way in which politics in Britain will gain a new lease of

life. But there is another. We aim to put behind us the bitter political struggles of Left and Right that have torn our country apart for too many decades. Many of these conflicts have no relevance whatsoever to the modern world — public versus private, bosses versus workers, middle class versus working class. It is time for this country to move on and move forward. We are proud of our history, proud of what we have achieved — but we must learn from our history, not be chained to it.

■ New Labour

The purpose of new Labour is to give Britain a different political choice: the choice between a failed Conservative Government, exhausted and divided in everything other than its desire to cling on to power, and a new and revitalised Labour Party that has been resolute in transforming itself into a party of the future.

We have rewritten our constitution, the new Clause IV, to put a commitment to enterprise alongside the commitment to justice. We have changed the way we make policy, and put our relations with the trade unions on a modern footing where they accept they can get fairness but no favours from a Labour government. Our MPs are all now selected by ordinary party members, not small communities or pressure groups. The membership itself has doubled, to over 400,000, with half the members having joined since the last election.

We submitted our draft manifesto, *New Labour: A New Life for Britain*, to a ballot of all our members, 95 per cent of whom gave it their express endorsement.

We are a national party, supported today by people from all walks of life, from the successful businessman or woman to the pensioner on a council estate. Young people have

flooded in to join us in what is the fastest growing youth section of any political party in the West.

■ The vision

We are a broad-based movement for progress and justice. New Labour is the political arm of none other than the British people as a whole. Our values are the same: the equal worth of all, with no one cast aside; fairness and justice within strong communities.

But we have liberated these values from outdated dogma or doctrine, and we have applied these values to the modern world.

I want a country in which people get on, do well, make a success of their lives. I have no time for the politics of envy. We need more successful entrepreneurs, not fewer of them. But these life-chances should be for all the people. And I want a society in which ambition and compassion are seen as partners not opposites — where we value public service as well as material wealth.

New Labour believes in a society where we do not simply pursue our own individual aims but where we hold many aims in common and work together to achieve them. How we build the industry and employment opportunities of the future; how we tackle the division and inequality in our society; how we care for and enhance our environment and quality of life; how we develop modern education and health services; how we create communities that are safe, where mutual respect and tolerance are the order of the day. These are things we must achieve together as a country.

The vision is one of national renewal, a country with drive, purpose and energy. A Britain equipped to prosper in a global economy of technological change, with a modern welfare state; its politics more accountable; and confident of its place in the world.

■ Programme: a new Centre and Centre Left politics

In each area of policy a new and distinctive approach has been mapped out, one that differs both from the solutions of the old Left and those of the Conservative Right. This is why new Labour is new. We believe in the strength of our values, but we recognise also that the policies of 1997 cannot be those of 1947 or 1967. More detailed policy has been produced by us than by any opposition in history. Our direction and destination are clear.

The old Left would have sought state control of industry. The Conservative Right is content to leave all to the market. We reject both approaches. Government and industry must work together to achieve key objectives aimed at enhancing the dynamism of the market, not undermining it.

In industrial relations, we make it clear that there will be no return to flying pickets, secondary action, strikes with no ballots or the trade union law of the 1970s. There will instead be basic minimum rights for the individual at the workplace, where our aim is partnership, not conflict, between employers and employees.

In economic management, we accept the global economy as a reality and reject the isolationism and "go-it-alone" policies of the extremes of Right or Left.

In education, we reject both the idea of a return to the 11-plus and the monolithic comprehensive schools that take no account of children's differing abilities. Instead we favour all-in schooling which identifies the distinct abilities of individual pupils and organises them in classes to maximise their progress in individual subjects. In this way we modernise the comprehensive principle, learning from the experience of its 30 years of application.

In health policy, we will safeguard the basic principles of the NHS, which we founded, but will not return to the top-down management of the 1970s. So we will keep the planning and provision of healthcare separate, but put planning on a longer-term, decentralised and more co-operative basis. The key is to root out unnecessary administrative cost, and to spend money on the right things — frontline care.

On crime, we believe in personal responsibility and in punishing crime, but also tackling its underlying causes — so, tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime, different from the Labour approach of the past and the Tory policy of today.

Over-centralisation of government and lack of accountability was a problem in governments of both Left and Right. Labour is committed to the democratic renewal of our country through decentralisation and the elimination of excessive government secrecy.

In addition, we will face up to the new issues that confront us. We will be the party of welfare reform. In consultation and partnership with the people, we will design a modern welfare state based on rights and duties going together, fit for the modern world.

We will stand up for Britain's interests in Europe after the shambles of the last six years, but, more than that, we will lead a campaign for reform in Europe. Europe isn't working in the way this country and Europe need. But to lead means to be involved, to be constructive, to be capable of getting our own way.

We will put concern for the environment at the heart of policymaking, so that it is not an add-on extra, but informs the whole of government, from housing and

energy policy through to global warming and international agreements.

We will search out at every turn new ways and new ideas to tackle the new issues: how to encourage more flexible working hours and practices to suit employees and employers alike; how to harness the huge potential of the new information technology; how to simplify the processes of the government machine; how to put public and private sector together in partnership to give us the infrastructure and transport system we need.

We will be a radical government. But the definition of radicalism will not be that of doctrine, whether of Left or Right, but of achievement. New Labour is a party of ideas and ideals but not of outdated ideology. What counts is what works. The objectives are radical. The means will be modern.

So the party is transformed. The vision is clear. And from that vision stems a modern programme of change and renewal for Britain. We understand that after 18 years of one-party rule, people want change, believe that it is necessary for the country and for democracy, but require faith to make the change.

We therefore set out in the manifesto that follows ten commitments, commitments that form our bond of trust with the people. They are specific. They are real. Judge us on them. Have trust in us and we will repay that trust.

Our mission in politics is to rebuild this bond of trust between government and the people. That is the only way democracy can flourish. I pledge to Britain a government which shares their hopes, which understands their fears, and which will work as partners with and for all our people, not just the privileged few. This is our contract with the people.

Continued on next page

Modernise schools ■ Raise standards ■ Parental power ■ Economic stability ■ Fair taxes

We will make education our No 1 priority:

- ☐ Cut classes to 30 or under for 5, 6 and 7 years
- ☐ Nursery places for all four year-olds
- ☐ Attack low standards in schools
- ☐ Access to computer technology
- ☐ Lifelong learning through a new University for Industry
- ☐ More spending on education as the cost of unemployment falls

EDUCATION

EDUCATION has been the Tories' biggest failure. It is Labour's number one priority.

It is not just good for the individual. It is an economic necessity for the nation. We will compete successfully on the basis of quality or not at all. And quality comes from developing the potential of all our people. It is the people who are our greatest natural asset. We will ensure they can fulfil their potential.

Nearly half of 11 year-olds in England and Wales fail to reach expected standards in English and maths. Britain has a smaller share of 17 and 18 year-olds in full-time education than any major industrial nation. Nearly two-thirds of the British workforce lack vocational qualifications.

There are excellent schools in Britain's state education system. But far too many children are denied the opportunity to succeed. Our task is to raise the standards of every school.

We will put an end to the old arguments that have bedevilled education in this country. We reject the Tories' obsession with school structures: all parents should be offered real choice through good quality schools, each with its own strengths and individual ethos. There should be no return to the 11-plus. It divides children into successes and failures at far too early an age.

We must modernise comprehensive schools. Children are not all of the same ability, nor do they learn at the same speed. That means setting children in classes to maximise progress, for the benefit of high-fliers and slower learners alike. The focus must be on levelling up, not levelling down.

With Labour, the Department for Education and Employment will become a leading office of state. It will give a strong and consistent lead to help raise standards in every school. Standards, more than structures, are the key to success. Labour will never put dogma before children's education. Our approach will be to intervene where there are problems, not where schools are succeeding.

Labour will never force the abolition of good schools whether in the private or state sector. Any changes in the admissions policies of grammar schools will be decided by local parents. Church schools will retain their distinctive religious ethos.

We will build bridges wherever we can across education divides. The educational apartheid created by the public/private divide diminishes the whole education system.

Zero tolerance of underperformance

Every school has the capacity to succeed. All Local Education Authorities (LEAs) must demonstrate that every school is improving. For those failing schools unable to improve, ministers will order a "fresh start" - close the school and start afresh on four year-olds. We will invite selected local authorities to pilot early excellence centres combining education and care for the under-fives. We will set targets for universal provision for three year-olds whose parents want it.

Quality nursery education guaranteed for all four year-olds

Nursery vouchers have been proven not to work. They are costly and do not generate more quality nursery places. We will use the money saved by scrapping nursery vouchers to guarantee places for four year-olds. We will invite selected local authorities to pilot early excellence centres combining education and care for the under-fives. We will set targets for universal provision for three year-olds whose parents want it.

New focus on standards in primary schools

Primary schools are the key to mastering the basics and developing in every child an eagerness to learn. Every school needs baseline assessment of pupils when they enter the school, and a year-on-year target for improvement.

We will reduce class sizes for five, six and seven year-olds to 30 or under, by phasing out the assisted places scheme, the cost of which is set to rise to £180 million per year.

We must recognise the three "Y"s for what they are - building blocks of all learning that must be taught better. We will achieve this by improving the skills of the teaching force, ensuring a strong focus on literacy in the curriculum, and piloting literacy summer schools to meet our new target that within a decade every child leaves primary school with a reading age of at least 11 (barely half do today).

Our numeracy taskforce will develop equally ambitious targets. We will encourage use of the most effective teaching methods, including phonics for reading and whole class interactive teaching for maths.

Attacking educational disadvantage

No matter where a school is, Labour will not tolerate under-achievement.

Public/private partnerships will improve the condition of school buildings. There will be education action zones to attack low standards by recruiting the best teachers and head teachers to under-achieving schools; by supporting voluntary mentoring schemes to provide one-to-one support for disadvantaged pupils; and by creating new opportunities for children, after the age of 14, to enhance their studies by acquiring knowledge and experience within industry and commerce.

To attack under-achievement in urban areas, we have developed a new scheme with the Premier League. In partnerships between central government, local government and football clubs, study support centres will be set up at Premier League grounds for the benefit of local children. The scheme will be launched on a pilot basis during the 1997/98 season.

We support the greatest possible integration into mainstream education of pupils with special educational needs.

While recognising that specialist facilities are essential to meet particular needs.

Realising the potential of new technology

Labour is the pioneer of new thinking. We have agreed with British Telecom and the cable companies that they will wire up schools, libraries, colleges and hospitals to the information super-highway free of charge. We have also secured agreement to make access charges as low as possible.

For the Internet we plan a National Grid for Learning, franchised as a public/private partnership, which will bring to teachers up-to-date materials to enhance their skills, and to children high-quality educational materials. We will use lottery money to improve the skills of existing teachers in information technology.

In opposition, Labour set up the independent Stevenson Commission to promote access for children to new technology. Its recent report is a challenging programme for the future. We are urgently examining how to implement its plans, in particular the development of educational software through a grading system which will provide schools with guarantees of product quality; and the provision for every child of an individual e-mail address. An independent standing committee will continue to advise us on the implementation of our plans in government.

The role of parents

We will increase the powers and responsibilities of parents.

There will be more parent governors and, for the first time, parent representatives on LEAs.

A major objective is to promote a culture of responsibility for learning within the family, through contracts between all schools and parents, defining the responsibilities of each. National guidelines will establish minimum periods for homework for primary and secondary school pupils.

Teachers will be entitled to positive support from parents to promote good attendance and sound discipline. Schools suffer from unruly and disruptive pupils. Exclusion or suspension may sometimes be necessary. We will, however, pilot new pupil referral units so that schools are protected but these pupils are not lost to education or the country.

New job description for LEAs

The judge and jury of LEA performance will be their contribution to raising standards.

LEAs are closer to schools than central government, and have the authority of being locally elected. But they will be required to exercise power, and more of their budgets, to heads and governors. LEA performance will be inspected by Ofsted and the Audit Commission. Where authorities are failing, the Secretary of State may suspend the relevant powers of the LEA and send in an improvement team.

Grant maintained schools

Schools that are now grant maintained will prosper with Labour's proposals, as every school.

Tory claims that Labour will close these schools are false. The system of levelling will not discriminate unfairly either between schools or between pupils. LEAs will be represented on governing bodies, but will not control them. We support guidelines for open and fair admissions, along the lines of those introduced in 1993, but we will also provide a right of appeal to an independent panel in disputed cases.

Teachers: pressure and support

Schools are critically dependent on the quality of all staff. The majority of teachers are skilful and dedicated, but some fall short. We will improve teacher training, and ensure that all teachers have an induction year when they first qualify, to ensure their suitability for teaching.

There will be a general teaching council to speak for and raise standards in the profession. We will create a new grade of teachers to recognise the best. There will, however, be speedy, but fair, procedures to remove teachers who cannot do the job.

The strength of a school is critically dependent on the quality of its head. We will establish mandatory qualifications for the post. A head teacher will be appointed to a position only when fully trained to accept the responsibility.

Higher education

The improvement and expansion needed cannot be funded out of general taxation. Our proposals for funding have been made to the Dearing Commission, in line with successful policies already in place.

The costs of student maintenance should be repaid by graduates on an income-related basis, from the career success to which higher education has contributed. The current system is badly administered and payback periods are too short. We will provide efficient administration, with fairness ensured by longer payback periods where required.

Lifelong learning

We must learn throughout life, to retain employment through new and improved skills. We will promote adult learning both at work and in the critical sector of further education.

In schools and colleges, we support broader A-levels and upgraded vocational qualifications, underpinned by rigorous standards and key skills. Employers have the primary responsibility for training their workforces in job-related skills. But individuals should be given the power to invest in training. We will invest public money for training in individual Learning Accounts which individuals - for example women returning to the labour force - can then



Moral leader: Tony Blair leaving home yesterday for the launch of his manifesto

This is Labour's five-year contract with the people

OVER the five years of a Labour government:

1: Education will be our number one priority, and we will increase the share of national income spent on education as we decrease it on the bills of economic and social failure.

2: There will be no increase in the basic or top rates of income tax.

3: We will provide stable economic growth with low inflation, and promote dynamic and competitive business and industry at home and abroad.

4: We will get 250,000 young unemployed off benefit and into work.

5: We will rebuild the NHS, reducing spending on administration and increasing spending on patient care.

6: We will be tough on crime and tough on the causes of crime, and halve the time it takes persistent juvenile offenders to come to court.

7: We will help build strong families and strong communities, and lay the foundations of a modern welfare state in pensions and community care.

8: We will safeguard our environment, and develop an integrated transport policy to fight congestion and pollution.

9: We will clean up politics, decentralise political power throughout the United Kingdom, and put the funding of political parties on a proper and accountable basis.

10: We will give Britain the leadership in Europe which Britain and Europe need.

We have modernised the Labour Party and we will modernise Britain. This means knowing where we want to go; being clear-headed about the country's future; telling the truth; making tough choices; insisting that all parts of the public sector live within their means; taking on vested interests that hold people back; standing up to unreasonable demands from any quarter; and being prepared to give a moral lead where government has responsibilities it should not avoid.

Britain does deserve better. And new Labour will be better for Britain.

use to gain the skills they want. We will kickstart the programme for up to a million people, using £150 million of TFC money which could be better used and which would provide a contribution of £150, alongside individuals making small investments. Employers will be encouraged to make voluntary contributions of the investors in People Initiative into many more small firms.

Our new University for Industry, collaborating with the Open University, will bring new opportunities to adults seeking to develop their potential. This will bring government, industry and education together to create a new resource whose remit will be to use new technology to enhance skills and education. The University for Industry will be a public/private partnership, commissioning software and developing the links to extend lifelong learning.

Government spending on education

The Conservatives have cut spending on education as a share of national income by the equivalent of more than £3 billion as spending on the bills of economic and social failure has risen. We are committed to reversing this trend of spending. Over the course of a five-year Parliament, as we cut the cost of economic and social failure, we will raise the income spent on education.

£2,000 in extra taxes - the biggest tax hike in peacetime history, breaking every promise made by John Major at the last election. The tragedy is that those hardest hit are least able to pay. That is why we strongly oppose the imposition of VAT on fuel: it was Labour that stopped the government from increasing VAT on fuel to 17.5 per cent.

Taxation is not neutral in the way it raises revenue. How and what governments tax sends clear signals about the economic activities they believe should be encouraged or discouraged, and the values they wish to entrench in society. Just as, for example, work should be encouraged through the tax system, environmental pollution should be discouraged.

New Labour will establish a new trust on tax with the British people. The promises we make we will keep. The principles that will underpin our tax policy are clear:

☐ To encourage employment opportunities and work incentives for all

☐ To promote savings and investment

☐ And to be fair and to be seen to be fair.

New Labour is not about high taxes on ordinary families. It is about social justice and a fair deal.

New Labour therefore makes the following economic pledges:

Fair taxes

There will be no return to the penal tax rates that existed under both Labour and Conservative governments in the 1970s.

To encourage work and reward effort, we are pledged not to raise the basic or top rates of income tax throughout the next Parliament.

Our long-term objective is a lower starting rate of income tax of ten pence in the pound. Reducing the high marginal rates at the bottom end of the earning scale often 70 or 80 per cent is not only fair but desirable to encourage employment.

This goal will benefit the many, not the few. It is in sharp contrast to the Tory goal of abolishing capital gains and inheritance tax, at least half the benefit of which will go to the richest 5,000 families in the country.

We will cut VAT on fuel to 5 per cent, the lowest level allowed.

We renew our pledge not to extend VAT to food, children's clothes, books and newspapers and public transport fares.

We will also examine the interaction of the tax and benefits systems so that they can be streamlined and modernised, so as to fulfil our objectives of promoting work incentives, reducing poverty and welfare dependency, and strengthening community and family life.

No risks with inflation

We will match the current target for low and stable inflation of 2.5 per cent or less. We will reform the Bank of England to ensure that decision-making on monetary policy is more effective, open, accountable and free from short-term political manipulation.

Strict rules for government borrowing

We will enforce the golden rule of public spending over the economic cycle, we will only borrow to invest and not to fund current expenditure.

We will ensure that - over the economic cycle - public debt as a percentage of national income is at a stable and prudent level.

Stick to planned public spending allocations for the first two years of office

Our decisions have not been taken lightly. They are a recognition of Conservative mismanagement of the public finances. For the next two years Labour will work within the departmental ceilings for spending already announced. We will resist unreasonable demands on the public purse, including any unreasonable public sector pay demands.

Switch spending from economic failure to investment

We will conduct a spending review and departmental reviews to assess how to use resources better, while rooting out waste and inefficiency in public spending. Labour priorities in public spending are different from Tory priorities.

Tax reform to promote saving and investment

We will introduce a new individual savings account and extend the principle of TESSAs and PEPs to promote long-term saving. We will review the corporate and capital gains tax regimes to see how the tax system can promote greater long-term investment.

Welfare-to-work Budget

We will introduce a Budget within two months after the election to begin the task of equipping the British economy and reforming the welfare state to get young people and the long-term unemployed back to work. This welfare-to-work programme will be funded by a windfall levy on the excess profits of the privatised utilities, introduced in this Budget after we have consulted the regulators.

We will help create successful and profitable businesses

- ☐ Backing business: skills, infrastructure, new markets
- ☐ Gains for consumers with tough competition law
- ☐ New measures to help small businesses
- ☐ National minimum wage to tackle low pay
- ☐ Boost local economic growth with Regional Development Agencies
- ☐ A strong and effective voice in Europe

BUSINESS

NEW Labour offers business a new deal for the future. We will leave intact the main changes of the 1980s in industrial relations and enterprise. We see healthy profits as an essential motor of a dynamic market economy, and believe they depend on quality products, innovative entrepreneurs and skilled employees. We will build a new partnership with business to improve the competitiveness of industry for the 21st century, leading to faster growth.

Many of the fundamentals of the British economy are still weak. Low pay and low skills go together: insecurity is the consequence of economic instability; the absence of quality jobs is a product of the weakness of our industrial base; we suffer from both high unemployment and skills shortages. There is no future for Britain as a low-wage economy: we cannot compete on wages with countries paying a tenth of British wages.

We need to win on higher quality, skill, innovation and reliability. With Labour, British and inward investment will find this country an attractive and profitable place to do business.

New Labour believes in a flexible labour market that serves employers and employees alike. But flexibility alone is not enough. We need flexibility plus:

☐ plus higher skills and higher standards in our schools and colleges

☐ plus policies to ensure economic stability

☐ plus partnership with business to raise investment in infrastructure, science and research and to back small business

☐ plus new leadership from Britain to reform Europe. In place of the current policy of drift and disengagement from our largest market

☐ plus guaranteeing Britain's membership of the single market - indeed, opening up markets inside and outside the EU - helping to make Britain an attractive place to do business

☐ plus minimum standards of fair treatment, including a national minimum wage

☐ plus an imaginative welfare-to-work programme to put long-term unemployed back to work and to cut social security costs.

A reformed and tougher competition law

Competitiveness abroad must begin with competition at home. Effective competition can bring value and quality to consumers. As an early priority we will reform Britain's competition law. We will adopt a tough prohibitive approach to deter anti-competitive practices.

In the utility industries we will promote competition wherever possible. Where competition is not an effective discipline, for example in the water industry which has a poor environmental record and has in most cases been a tax-free zone, we will pursue tough, efficient regulation in the interests of customers, and, in the case of water, in the interests of the environment as well. We recognise the need for open and predictable regulation which is fair both to consumers and to shareholders and at the same time provides incentives for managers to innovate and improve efficiency.

Reinvigorate the Private Finance Initiative

The country's infrastructure is dangerously run down: parts of our road and rail network are seriously neglected, and all too often our urban environment has been allowed to deteriorate.

Labour pioneered the idea of public-private partnerships. It is Labour local authorities which have done most to create these partnerships at local level. A Labour government will overcome the problems that have plagued the PFI at a national level. We will set priorities between projects, saving time and expense; we will seek a realistic allocation of risk between the partners to a project; and we will ensure that best practice is spread throughout government. We will aim to simplify and speed up the planning process for major infrastructure projects of vital national interest.

We will ensure that self-financing commercial organisations within the public sector - the Post Office is a prime example - are given greater commercial freedom to make the most of new opportunities.

Backing small business

The number of small employers has declined by half a million since 1990. Support for small businesses will have a major role in our plans for economic growth. We will cut unnecessary red tape; provide for statutory priority on

late payment of debts; improve support for high-tech start-ups; improve the quality and relevance of advice and training through a reformed Business Links network and the University for Industry; and assist firms to enter overseas markets more effectively.

Local economic growth

Prosperity needs to be built from the bottom up. We will establish one-stop regional development agencies to co-ordinate regional economic development, help small business and encourage inward investment. Many regions are taking informal steps to this end and they will be supported.

Strengthen our capability in science, technology and design

The UK must be positively committed to the global pursuit of new knowledge, with a strong science base in our universities and centres of excellence leading the world. The Dearing Committee represents a significant opportunity to promote high-quality standards in science teaching and research throughout UK higher education. We support a UK approach between researchers and business, spreading the use of new technology and good design, and exploiting our own inventions to boost business in the UK.

Promoting new green technologies and businesses

There is huge potential to develop Britain's environmental technology industries to create jobs, win exports and protect the environment.

Effective environmental management is an increasingly important component of modern business practice. We support a major push to promote energy conservation (particularly by the promotion of home energy efficiency schemes, linked to our environment taskforce for the under-25s. We are committed to an energy policy designed to promote cleaner, more efficient energy use and production, including a new and strong drive to develop renewable energy sources such as solar and wind energy, and combined heat and power. We see no economic case for the building of any new nuclear power stations.

Key elements of the 1980s trade union reforms to stay

There must be minimum standards for the individual at work, including a minimum wage, within a flexible labour market. We need a sensible balance in industrial relations law - rights and duties go together.

The key elements of the trade union legislation of the 1980s will stay - on ballots, picketing and industrial action. People should be free to join or not to join a union. Where they do decide to join, and where a majority of the relevant workforce vote in a ballot for the union to represent them, the union should be recognised. This promotes stable industrial relations. There will be full consultation on the most effective means of implementing this proposal.

Partnership at work

The best companies recognise their employees as partners in the enterprise. Employees whose conditions are good are more committed to their companies and are more productive. Many unions and employers are embracing partnership in place of conflict. Government should welcome this.

We are keen to encourage a variety of forms of partnership and enterprise, spreading ownership and encouraging more employees to become owners through Employee Share Ownership Plans. We support too the Social Chapter of the EU, but will deploy our influence in Europe to ensure that it develops so as to promote employability and competitiveness, not inflexibility.

A sensible set national minimum wage

There should be a statutory level of earnings which pay should not fall - with the minimum wage decided not on the basis of a rigid formula, but according to the economic circumstances of the time and with the advice of an independent low pay commission, whose membership will include representatives of employers, including small business, and employees.

Every modern industrial country has a minimum wage, including the US and Japan. Britain used to have minimum wages through the Wages Councils. Introduced sensibly, the minimum wage will remove the worst excesses of low pay (and be of particular benefit to women), while cutting some of the massive £4 billion benefits bill by which the taxpayer subsidises companies that pay very low wages.

Continued on next page

NHS for the future ■ Tough on crime ■ Dignity in retirement ■ Improve the Underground

We will get the unemployed from welfare to work

- Stop the growth of an underclass in Britain
- 250,000 young unemployed off benefit and into work
- Tax cuts for employers who create new jobs for the long-term unemployed
- Effective help for lone parents

EMPLOYMENT

There are over one million fewer jobs in Britain than in 1990. One in five families has no one working. One million single mothers are trapped on benefits. There is a wider gap between rich and poor than for generations.

We are determined not to continue down the road of a permanent have-not class, unemployed and disaffected from society. Our long-term objective is high and stable levels of employment. This is the true meaning of a stakeholder economy where everyone has a stake in society and owes responsibilities to it.

The best way to tackle poverty is to help people into jobs and training. The unemployed have a responsibility to take up the opportunity of training places or work, but these must be real opportunities. The government's welfare proposals with a success rate of one in ten fail this test.

Labour's welfare-to-work programme will attack unemployment and break the spiral of escalating spending on social security. A one-off windfall levy on the excess profits of the privatised utilities will fund our ambitious programme.

■ Every young person unemployed for more than six months in a job or training

We will give 250,000 under-25s opportunities for work, education and training. Four options will be on offer, each involving day-release education or training leading to a qualification:

- Private-sector job: employers will be offered a 100-week rebate for six months
- Work with a non-profit voluntary sector employer, paying a weekly wage, equivalent to benefit plus a fixed sum for six months
- Full-time study for young people without qualifications on an approved course
- A job with the environment taskforce, linked to Labour's citizens service programme

Rights and responsibilities must go hand in hand, without a fifth option of life on full benefit.

■ Every 16 and 17-year-old on the road to a proper qualification by the year 2000

Nearly a third of young people do not achieve an NVQ level two qualification

by age 19. All young people will be offered part-time or full-time education after the age of 16. Any under-18-year-old in a job will have the right to study on an approved course for qualifications at college. We will replace the failed Youth Training scheme with our new Target 2000 programme, offering young people high-quality education and training.

■ Action on long-term unemployment

New partnerships between government and business, fully involving local authorities and the voluntary sector, will attack long-term joblessness. We will encourage employers to take on those who have suffered unemployment for more than two years with a 75-a-week tax rebate paid for six months, financed by the windfall levy. Our programme for the phased release of past recipients from council house sales will provide new jobs in the construction industry.

■ Lone parents into work

Today the main conflict between unemployed lone parents and the state is their benefits. Most lone parents want to work, but are given no help in finding it. New Labour has a positive policy. Once the youngest child is in the second term of full-time school, lone parents will be offered advice by a practical Employment Service to develop a package of job search, training and after-school care to help them off benefit.

■ Customised, personalised services

We launch initiatives with new combinations of available benefits in suit individual circumstances. In new and innovative Employment Zones, personal job accounts will combine money currently available for benefits and training, to offer the unemployed new options leading to work and independence. We will co-ordinate benefits, employment and career services, and utilise new technology to improve their quality and efficiency.

■ Fraud

Just as we owe it to the taxpayer to crack down on tax avoidance, so we must crack down on dishonesty in the benefit system. We will start with a clampdown on Housing Benefit fraud, estimated to cost £2 billion a year, and will maintain action against benefit fraud of all kinds.

We will save the NHS

- 100,000 people off waiting lists
- End the Tory internal market
- End waiting for cancer surgery
- Tough quality targets for hospitals
- Independent food standards agency
- New public health drive
- Raise spending in real terms every year and spend the money on patients not bureaucracy

HEALTH SERVICE

LABOUR created the NHS 50 years ago. It is under threat from the Conservatives. We want to save and modernise the NHS.

But if the Conservatives are elected again there may well not be an NHS in five years' time — neither national nor comprehensive. Labour commits itself anew to the historic principle: that if you are ill or injured there will be a National Health Service there to help and access to it will be based on need and need alone — not on your ability to pay, or on who your GP happens to be or on where you live.

In 1940 the Conservatives imposed on the NHS a complex internal market of hospitals competing to win contracts from health authorities and fundholding GPs. The result is an NHS strangled by costly red tape, with every individual transaction the subject of a separate invoice. After six years, bureaucracy swallows an extra £1.5 billion per year: there are 20,000 more managers and 50,000 fewer nurses on the wards; and more than one million people are on waiting lists. The Government has consistently failed to meet even its own health targets.

There can be no return to top-down management, but Labour will end the Conservatives' internal market in healthcare. The planning and provision of care are necessary and distinct functions, and will remain so. But under the Tories, the administrative costs of purchasing care have undermined provision and the market system has distorted clinical priorities. Labour will cut costs by removing the bureaucratic processes of the internal market.

The savings achieved will go on direct care for patients. As a start, the first £100 million saved will treat an extra 100,000 patients. We will end waiting for cancer surgery, thereby helping thousands of women waiting for breast cancer treatment.

■ Primary care will play a lead role

In recent years, GPs have gained power on behalf of their patients in a changed relationship with consultants, and we support this. But the development of GP fundholding has also brought disadvantages. Decision-making has been fragmented. Administrative costs have grown. And a two-tier service has resulted.

Labour will retain the lead role for primary care, but remove the disadvantages that have come from the present system. GPs and nurses will make the lead in combining together locally to plan local health services more efficiently for all the patients in an area. This will enable all GPs in an area to bring their combined strength to bear upon individual hospitals to secure higher standards of patient provision. In making this change, we will build on the existing collaborative schemes which already serve 14 million people.

The current system of year-to-year contracts is costly and unstable. We will introduce three- to five-year care contracts between the local primary care teams and hospitals. Hospitals will then be better able to plan work at full capacity and co-operate to enhance patient services.

■ Higher-quality services for patients

Hospitals will retain their autonomy over day-to-day administrative functions, but, as part of the NHS, they will be required to meet high-quality standards in the provision of care. Management will be held to account for performance levels. Boards will become more representative of the local communities they serve.

A new patients' charter will concentrate on the quality and success of treatment. The Tories-called Efficiency Index counts the number of patient episodes, not the quality or success of treatment. With Labour, the measure will be quality of outcome, itself an incentive for effectiveness. As part of our concern to ensure quality, we will work towards the elimination of mixed-sex wards.

Health authorities will become the guardians of high standards. They will monitor services, spread best practice and ensure rising standards of care. The Tory attempt to use private money to build hospitals has failed to deliver. Labour will overcome the problems that have plagued the Private Finance Initiative, end the delays, sort out the confusion and develop new forms of public/private partnership that work better and protect the interests of the NHS. Labour is opposed to the privatisation of clinical services which is being actively promoted by the Conservatives.

Labour will promote new developments in telemedicine — bringing expert advice from regional centres of excellence to neighbourhood level using new technology.

■ Good health

A new minister for public health will attack the root causes of ill health, and so improve lives and save the NHS money. We will raise spending on the NHS in real terms every year and put the money towards patient care. And a greater proportion of every pound spent will go on patient care not bureaucracy.

■ An NHS for the future

The NHS requires continuity as well as change, or the system cannot cope. There must be pilots to ensure that change works. And there must be flexibility, not rigid prescription, if innovation is to flourish.

Our fundamental purpose is simple but hugely important: to restore the NHS as a public service working co-operatively for patients, not a commercial business driven by competition.



Education is Labour's Number 1 priority — from smaller class sizes to a University for Industry

We will be tough on crime and tough on the causes of crime

- Fast-track punishment for persistent young offenders
- Reform Crown Prosecution Service to convict more criminals
- Police on the beat not pushing paper
- Crackdown on petty crimes and disorder
- Fresh parliamentary vote to ban all handguns

LAW AND ORDER

UNDER the Conservatives, crime has doubled and many more criminals get away with their crimes: the number of people convicted has fallen by a third, with only one crime in 50 leading to a conviction. This is the worst record of any government since the Second World War and for England and Wales the worst record of any major industrialised country. Last year alone violent crime rose 11 per cent.

We propose a new approach to law and order: tough on crime and tough on the causes of crime. We insist on individual responsibility for crime, and will attack the causes of crime by our measures to relieve social deprivation. The police have our strong support. They are in the front line of the fight against crime and disorder. The Conservatives have broken their 1992 general election pledge to provide an extra 1,000 police officers. We will relieve the police of unnecessary bureaucratic burdens to get more officers back on the beat.

■ Youth crime

Youth crime and disorder have risen sharply, but very few young offenders end up in court, and when they do half are let off with another warning. Young offenders account for seven million crimes a year.

Far too often young criminals offend again and again while waiting months for a court hearing. We will halve the time it takes to get persistent young offenders from arrest to sentencing, replace widespread repeat cautions with a single final warning, bring together Youth Offender Teams in every area; and streamline the system of youth courts to make it far more effective.

The courts will have to spell out what sentence really means in practice. The Court of Appeal will have a duty to lay down sentencing guidelines for the main offences. The Attorney-General's power to appeal unduly lenient sentences will be extended.

The prison service now faces serious financial problems. We will audit the resources available, take proper ministerial responsibility for the service, and seek to ensure that prison regimes are constructive and require inmates to face up to their offending behaviour.

■ Conviction and sentencing

The job of the Crown Prosecution Service is to prosecute criminals effectively. The CPS is over-centralised, bureaucratic and inefficient, with cases too often dropped, delayed, or downgraded in lesser offences.

Labour will decentralise the CPS, with local prosecutors co-operating more effectively with local police forces. We will implement an effective sentencing system for all the main offences to ensure greater consistency and stricter punishment for serious repeat offenders.

The courts will have to spell out what sentence really means in practice. The Court of Appeal will have a duty to lay down sentencing guidelines for the main offences. The Attorney-General's power to appeal unduly lenient sentences will be extended.

■ Prevention

We will place a new responsibility on local authorities to develop statutory partnerships to help prevent crime. Local councils will then be required to set targets for the reduction of crime and disorder in their area.

■ Gun control

In the wake of Dunblane and Hungerford, it is clear that only the strictest firearms laws can provide maximum safety. The Conservatives failed to offer the protection required. Labour led the call for an outright ban on all handguns in general civilian use. There will be legislation to allow individual MPs a free vote for a complete ban on handguns.

Labour is the party of law and order.

We will strengthen family life

- Help parents balance work and family
- Security in housing and help for homeowners
- Tackle homelessness using receipts from council house sales
- Dignity and security in retirement
- Protect the basic state pension and promote secure second pensions

THE FAMILY

WE WILL uphold family life as the most secure means of bringing up our children. Families are the core of our society. They should be right from the start. They should be the first defence against antisocial behaviour. The breakdown of family life damages the fabric of our society.

Labour does not see families and the State as rival providers for the needs of our citizens. Families should provide the day-to-day support for children to be brought up in a stable and loving

environment. But families cannot flourish unless government plays its distinctive role in education; where necessary, in caring for the young in making adequate provision for illness and old age; in supporting good parenting; and in protecting families from lawlessness and abuse of power. Society, through government, must assist families to achieve collectively what no family can achieve alone.

Yet families in Britain today are under strain as never before. The security once

offered by the health service has been undermined. Streets are not safe. Housing insecurity grows. One in five non-pensioner families has no one working; and British men work the longest hours in Europe.

The clock should not be turned back. As many women who want to work should be able to do so. More equal relationships between men and women have transformed our lives. Equality, our attitudes to race, sex and sexuality have changed fundamentally. Our task is to combine change and social stability.

■ Work and family

Families without work are without independence. This is why we give so much emphasis to our welfare-to-work policies.

Labour's national childcare strategy will plan provision to match the requirements of the modern labour market and help parents, especially women, to balance family and working life.

There must be a sound balance between support for family life and the protection of business from undue burdens. A balance which some of the most successful businesses already strike. The current Government has shown itself wholly insensitive to the need to help develop family-friendly working practices. While recognising the need for flexibility in implementation and for certain exemptions, we support the right of employees not to be forced to work more than 48 hours a week; to an annual holiday entitlement; and to limited unpaid parental leave. These measures will provide a valuable underpinning to family life.

■ Security in housing

Most families want to own their own homes. We will also support efficiently run social and private rented sectors offering quality and choice.

The Conservatives' failure on housing has been awful. The two thirds of families who own their homes have suffered a massive increase in insecurity over the last decade, with record mortgage arrears, record negative equity and record repossession rates. And the Conservatives' lack of a housing strategy has led to the virtual abandonment of social housing, the growth of homelessness, and a failure to address fully leaseholder reform. All these are the Tory legacy.

Labour's housing strategy will address the needs of homeowners and tenants alike. We will reject the boom and bust policies which caused the collapse of the housing market.

We will work with mortgage providers to encourage greater provision of more flexible mortgages to protect families in a world of increased job insecurity.

Mortgage buyers also require stronger consumer protection, for example by extension of the Financial Services Act, against the sale of disadvantageous mortgage packages.

The problems of guaranteeing have remained. Those who break their bargains should be liable to pay the costs inflicted on others, in particular legal and survey costs. We are consulting on the best way of tackling the problems of guaranteeing in the interests of responsible home buyers and sellers.

■ The rented housing sector

We support a three-way partnership between the public, private and housing association sectors to promote good social housing. With Labour, capital receipts from the sale of council houses, received but not spent by local councils, will be re-invested in building new houses and rehabilitating old ones. This will be phased to match the capacity of the building industry and to meet the requirements of prudent economic management.

We also support effective schemes to deploy private finance to improve the public housing stock and to introduce greater diversity and choice. Such schemes should only go ahead with the support of the Government's right to hand over council housing to private landlords without the consent of tenants and with no guarantees on rents or security of tenure.

We have a revised private rented sector. We will provide protection where most needed: for tenants in houses in multiple occupation.

There will be a proper system of

licensing by local authorities which will benefit tenants and responsible landlords alike.

■ Homelessness

Homelessness has more than doubled under the Conservatives. Today more than 40,000 families in England are in expensive temporary accommodation. The Government, in the face of Labour opposition, has removed the duty on local authorities to find permanent housing for homeless families. We will impose a new duty on local authorities to protect those who are homeless through no fault of their own and are in priority need.

There is no more powerful symbol of Tory neglect in our society today than young people without homes living rough on the streets. Young people emerging from care without any family support are particularly vulnerable. We will attack the problem in two principal ways: the phased release of capital receipts from council house sales will increase the stock of housing for rent; and our welfare-to-work programme will lead the young unemployed into work and financial independence.

■ Older citizens

We value the positive contribution that older people make to our society, through their families, voluntary activities and work. Their skills and experience should be utilised within their communities. That is why, for example, we support the proposal to involve older people as volunteers to help children learn in pre-school and after-school clubs. In work, they should not be discriminated against because of their age.

The provision of adequate pensions in old age is a major challenge for the future. For today's pensioners, Conservative policies have created real poverty, growing inequality and widespread insecurity.

The Conservatives would abolish the state-financed basic retirement pension and replace it with a privatised scheme, with a vague promise of a means-tested state guarantee if pensions fall beneath a minimum level. Their proposals mean there will be no savings on welfare spending for a century; and taxes will have to rise to make provision for new privately funded pensions. Their plans require an additional £32 billion between now and 2040 through increased taxes or borrowing, against the hope of savings later, with no certainty of security in retirement at the end.

We believe that all pensioners should share fairly in the increasing prosperity of the nation. Instead of privatisation, we propose a partnership between public and private provision, and a balance between income sourced from pension and its value, second pension will be retained as the foundation of pension provision. It will be increased at least in line with prices. We will examine means of delivering more automatic help to the poorest pensioners, one million of whom do not even

receive the Income Support which is their present entitlement.

We will encourage saving for retirement, with proper protection for savings. We will reform the Financial Services Act so that the scandal of pension mis-selling — 600,000 pensions mis-sold and only 7,000 people compensated to date — will not happen again.

Too many people in work, particularly those on low and modest incomes and with changing patterns of employment, cannot join good-value second pension schemes. Labour will create a new framework stakeholder pensions to meet this need. We will encourage new partnerships between financial service companies, employers and employees to develop these pension schemes. They will be approved to receive people's savings only if they meet high standards of value for money, flexibility and security.

Labour will promote choice in pension provision. We will support and strengthen the framework for occupational pensions. Personal pensions, appropriately regulated, will remain a good option for many. Labour will retain Serps as an option for those who wish to remain within it. We will also seek to develop the administrative structure of Serps so as to create a citizenship pension for those who assume responsibility as carers, as a result lose out on the pension entitlements they would otherwise acquire, and currently end up on means-tested benefits.

We overcame government opposition to pension splitting between women and men on divorce. We will implement this in government.

We aim to provide real security for families through a more system of community care. As people grow older, their need for care increases. The Conservative approach is to promote private insurance and privatisation of care homes. But private insurance will be inaccessible to most people. And their policy for residential homes is dogmatic and will not work. We believe that local authorities should be free to develop a mix of public and private care.

We recognise the immense amount of care provision undertaken by family members, neighbours and friends. It was a Labour MP who piloted the 1995 Carers Act through Parliament. We will establish a Royal Commission to work out a fair system for funding long-term care for the elderly. We will introduce a long-term care charter defining the standard of services which people are entitled to expect from health, housing and social services. We are committed to an independent inspection and regulation service for residential homes, and domiciliary care.

Everyone is entitled to dignity in retirement. Under the Tories, the savings link for state pensions has been ended. VAT on fuel has been imposed. Serps has been undermined and community care is in tatters. We will set up a review of the central areas of insecurity for elderly people: all aspects of the basic pension and its value, second pension will be retained as the foundation of pension provision. It will be increased at least in line with prices. We will examine means of delivering more automatic help to the poorest pensioners, one million of whom do not even

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We overcame government opposition to pension splitting between women and men on divorce. We will implement this in government.

We aim to provide real security for families through a more system of community care. As people grow older, their need for care increases. The Conservative approach is to promote private insurance and privatisation of care homes. But private insurance will be inaccessible to most people. And their policy for residential homes is dogmatic and will not work. We believe that local authorities should be free to develop a mix of public and private care.

Everyone is entitled to dignity in retirement. Under the Tories, the savings link for state pensions has been ended. VAT on fuel has been imposed. Serps has been undermined and community care is in tatters. We will set up a review of the central areas of insecurity for elderly people: all aspects of the basic pension and its value, second pension will be retained as the foundation of pension provision. It will be increased at least in line with prices. We will examine means of delivering more automatic help to the poorest pensioners, one million of whom do not even

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We will encourage saving for retirement, with proper protection for savings. We will reform the Financial Services Act so that the scandal of pension mis-selling — 600,000 pensions mis-sold and only 7,000 people compensated to date — will not happen again.

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Support for rural economy ■ Host the 2006 World Cup ■ Open government ■ Retain Trident

Continued from previous page
all British citizens to be able to compete fairly in the interests of consumers.

Life in our countryside

Labour recognises the special needs of people who live and work in rural areas. The Conservatives do not. Public services and transport services in rural areas must not be allowed to deteriorate. The Conservatives have tried to privatise the Post Office. We oppose that, in favour of a public Post Office providing a comprehensive service. Conservative plans would mean higher charges for letters and put rural post offices under threat.

We favour a moratorium on large-scale sales of Forestry Commission land. We recognise that the countryside is a great natural asset, a part of our heritage which calls for careful stewardship. This must be balanced, however, with the needs of people who live and work in rural areas.

The total failure of the Conservatives to manage the BSE crisis effectively and to secure any raising of the ban on British beef has wreaked havoc on the beef and dairy industries. The cost to the taxpayer so far is £3.5 billion.

Labour aims to reform the Common Agricultural Policy to save money, to support the rural economy and enhance the environment.

Our initiatives to link all schools to the information superhighway will ensure that children in rural areas have access to the best educational resources.

Our policies include greater freedom for people to explore our open countryside. We will not, however, permit any abuse of a right to greater access.

We will ensure greater protection for wildlife. We have advocated new measures to promote animal welfare, including a free vote in Parliament on whether hunting with hounds should be banned by legislation.

Angling is Britain's most popular sport. Labour's anglers' charter affirms our longstanding commitment to angling and to the objective of protecting the aquatic environment.

Arts and culture

The arts, culture and sport are central to the task of recreating the sense of community, identity and civic pride that should define our country. Yet we consistently undervalue the role of the arts and culture in helping to create a civic society — from amateur theatre to our art galleries.

Art, sport and leisure are vital to our quality of life and the renewal of our economy. They are significant earners for Britain. They employ hundreds of thousands of people. They bring millions of tourists to Britain every year, who will also be helped by Labour's plans for new quality assurance in hotel accommodation.

We propose to set up a National Endowment for Science and the Arts to sponsor young talent. Nesta will be a national trust — for talent rather than buildings — for the 21st century. Nesta will be partly funded by the lottery; and artists who have gained high rewards from their creative work in the arts and wish to support young talent will be encouraged to donate copyright and royalties to Nesta.

Sport

A Labour government will take the lead

in extending opportunities for participation in sports, and in identifying sporting excellence and supporting it.

School sports must be the foundation. We will bring the government's policy of forcing schools to sell off playing fields to an end. We will provide full backing to the bid to host the 2006 football World Cup in England. A Labour government will also work to bring the Olympics and other major international sporting events to Britain.

A people's lottery

The lottery has been a financial success. But there has been no overall strategy for the allocation of monies; and no coordination among the five distributor bodies about the projects deserving to benefit from lottery funding. For example, the multi-million-pound expenditure on the Churchill papers caused national outrage. A Labour government will review the distribution of proceeds from the lottery to ensure that there is the widest possible access to the benefits of lottery revenues throughout the United Kingdom.

Labour has already proposed a new millennium commission to commence after the closure of the Millennium Exhibition, to provide direct support for a range of education, environment and public health projects, including those directed at children's play, a project currently excluded from lottery benefit.

Because the lottery is a monopoly intended to serve the public interest, it must be administered efficiently and economically. When the current contract runs out, Labour will seek an efficient not-for-profit operator to ensure that the maximum sums go to good causes.

Media and broadcasting

Labour aims for a thriving, diverse media industry, combining commercial success and public service. We will ensure that the BBC continues to be a flagship for British creativity and public service broadcasting, but we believe that the combination of public and private sectors in competition is a key spur to innovation and high standards. The regulatory framework for media and broadcasting should reflect the realities of a far more open and competitive economy, and enormous technological advances, for example with digital television. Labour will balance sensible rules, fair regulation and national and international competition, so maintaining quality and diversity for the benefit of viewers.

Citizen's service for a new millennium

An independent and creative voluntary

sector, committed to voluntary activity as an expression of citizenship, is central to our vision of a stakeholder society. We are committed to developing plans for a national citizens' service programme, to tap the enthusiasm and commitment of the many young people who want to make voluntary contributions in service of their communities. The millennium spirit of volunteerism is a key to the success of our society. We will ensure that those people who have so much to offer for the benefit of the community, we do not believe programmes should be imposed from the top down, but on the contrary wish to encourage a broad range of voluntary initiatives devised and developed by people within their own communities.



Tony Blair and Scottish Labour MP George Robertson are greeted by a large crowd in the Stirling constituency yesterday

the proposal to give it defined and limited financial powers to vary revenue. The Scottish parliament will extend democratic control over the responsibilities currently exercised administratively by the Scottish Office. The responsibilities of the UK Parliament will remain unchanged over UK policy, for example economic, defence and foreign policy.

The Welsh assembly will provide democratic control of the existing Welsh Office functions. It will have secondary legislative powers and will be specifically empowered to reform and democratised the quango state. It will be elected by an additional member system.

Following majorities in the referendums, we will introduce in the first year of the Parliament legislation on the substantive devolution proposals outlined in our white papers.

Good local government
Local decision-making should be less constrained by central government, and also more accountable to local people.

We will place on councils a new duty to promote the economic, social and environmental well-being of their area. They should work in partnership with local people, local business and local voluntary organisations. They will have the powers necessary to develop these partnerships. To ensure greater accountability, a proportion of councillors in each locality will be elected annually. We will encourage democratic innovations in local government, including pilots of ideas of elected mayors with executive powers in cities.

Although crude and universal council tax capping should go, we will retain reserve powers to control excessive council tax rises.

Local business concerns are critical to good local government. There are three democratic reasons why, in principle, the business rate should be set locally, not nationally. But we will make no change to the present system for determining the business rate without full consultation with business.

The funneling of government grant to Conservative-controlled Westminster speaks volumes about the unfairness of the current grant system. Labour is committed to a fair distribution of government grant.

The basic framework, not every detail, of local service provision must be for central government. Councils should be free to put their services out to tender, but will be required to obtain best value. We reject the dogmatic view that services must be privatised to be of high quality, but equally we see no reason why a service should be delivered directly if other more efficient means are available. Cost cuts do not do quality.

Every council will be required to publish a local performance plan with targets for service improvement, and be expected to achieve them. The Audit Commission will give an annual assessment to monitor performance and promote efficiency. On its advice, government will where necessary send in a management team with full powers to remedy failure.

Labour councils have been at the forefront of environmental initiatives under Local Agenda 21, the international framework for local action arising from the 1992 Earth Summit. A Labour government will encourage all local authorities to adopt plans to protect and enhance their local environment.

Local government is at the sharp end of the fight against deprivation. Ten years after the Conservatives promised to improve the inner cities, poverty and social division afflict towns and outer estates alike. A Labour government will join with local government in a concerted attack against the multiple causes of social and economic decline — unemployment, bad housing, crime, poor health and a degraded environment.

London
London is the only Western capital without an elected city government. Following a referendum to confirm popular demand, there will be a new deal for London, with a strategic authority and a mayor, each directly elected. Both will speak up for the needs of the city and plan its future. They will not duplicate the work of the boroughs, but take responsibility for London-wide issues — economic regeneration, planning, policing, transport and environmental protection. London-wide responsibility for its own government is urgently required. We will make it happen.

The regions of England
The Conservatives have created a tier of regional government in England through quangos and to vary revenue elected by an additional member system. In the Scottish referendum we will seek separate endorsement of the proposal to create a parliament, and of

the establishment of regional chambers to co-ordinate transport, planning, economic development, bids for European funding and land use planning.

Demand for directly elected regional government so varies across England that it would be wrong to impose a uniform system. In time we will introduce legislation to allow the people, region by region, to decide in a referendum whether they want directly elected regional government. Only where clear popular consent is established will arrangements be made for elected regional assemblies. This would require a predominantly unitary system of local government, as presently exists in Scotland and Wales, and confirmation by independent referenda that no additional public expenditure overall would be involved. Our plans will not mean adding a new tier of government to the existing English system.

Real rights for citizens
Citizens should have statutory rights to enforce their human rights in the UK courts. We will by statute incorporate the European Convention on Human Rights into UK law to bring these rights home and allow our people access to them in their national courts.

The incorporation of the European Convention will ensure a floor, not a ceiling, for human rights. Parliament will remain free to enhance these rights, for example by a Freedom of Information Act.

We will seek to end unjustifiable discrimination wherever it exists. For example, we support comprehensive enforceable rights for disabled people against discrimination in society or at work, developed in partnership with all interested parties.

Labour will undertake a wide-ranging review both of the reform of the civil justice system and legal aid. We will achieve value for money for the taxpayer and get central contracting and legal aid service will develop local, regional and national plans for the development of legal aid according to the needs and priorities of regions and areas. The key to success will be to promote a partnership between the voluntary sector, the legal profession and the Legal Aid Board.

Every country must have firm control over immigration and Britain is no exception. All applications, however, should be dealt with speedily and fairly. There are, rightly, criteria for those who want to enter this country to join husband or wife. We will ensure that these are properly enforced. We will, however, reform the system in current use to remove the arbitrary and unfair criteria that can follow from the existing "primary purpose" rule. There will be a streamlined system of appeals for visitors denied a visa.

The system for dealing with asylum seekers is expensive and slow — there are many undecided cases dating back beyond 1993. We will ensure swift and fair decisions on whether someone can stay or go, centralising asylum and migration advisers and crack down on the fraudulent use of birth certificates.

Northern Ireland
Labour's approach to the peace process has set out in the Downing Street Declaration the recent agreements between the two governments — the Anglo-Irish Agreement, the Downing Street Declaration and the Framework Document. The Government has tabled proposals which include a new devolved legislative body, as well as cross-border co-operation and continued dialogue between the two governments.

There will be as great a priority attached to seeing that process through with Labour as under the Conservatives, in co-operation with the Irish Government and the Northern Ireland parties. We will expect the same bipartisan approach from a Conservative opposition.

We will take effective measures to combat the terrorist threat.

There is now general acceptance that the future of Northern Ireland must be determined by the consent of the people as set out in the Downing Street Declaration. Labour recognises that the option of a united Ireland does not command the consent of the Unionist tradition, nor does the existing status of Northern Ireland command the consent of the Nationalist tradition. We are therefore committed to reconciliation between the two traditions and to a new political settlement which can command the support of both. Labour will help build trust and confidence among both Nationalist and Unionist traditions in Northern Ireland by acting to guarantee human rights, strengthen confidence in policing, combat discrimination at work and reduce tensions over parades. Labour will also foster economic progress and competitiveness in Northern Ireland, so as to reduce unemployment.

We will give Britain leadership in Europe

- ☐ Referendum on single currency
- ☐ Lead reform of the EU
- ☐ Retain Trident: strong defence through NATO
- ☐ A reformed United Nations
- ☐ Helping to tackle global poverty

EUROPE

BRITAIN, though an island nation with limited natural resources, has for centuries been a leader of nations. But under the Conservatives Britain's influence has waned.

With a new Labour government, Britain will be strong in defence, resolute in standing up for its own interests; an advocate of human rights and democracy the world over; a reliable and powerful ally in the international institutions of which we are a member; and will be a leader in Europe.

Our vision of Europe is of an alliance of independent nations choosing to co-operate to achieve the goals they cannot achieve alone. We oppose a European federal superstate.

There are only three options for Britain in Europe. The first is to come out. The second is to stay in, but on the sidelines. The third is to stay in, but in a leading role.

An increasing number of Conservatives, overtly or covertly, favour the first. But withdrawal would be disastrous for Britain. It would put millions of jobs at risk. It would dry up inward investment. It would destroy our clout in international trade negotiations. A new Labour government will build a strong defence against these threats. Our security will continue to be based on Nato.

Our armed forces are among the most effective in the world. The country takes pride in their professionalism and courage. We will ensure that they remain strong to defend Britain. But the security of Britain is best served in a secure world, so we should be willing to contribute to wider international peace and security both through the alliances to which we belong, in particular Nato and the Western European Union, and through other international organisations such as the United Nations and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe.

Labour will conduct a strategic defence and security review to reassess our essential security interests and defence needs. It will consider how the roles, missions and capabilities of our armed forces should be adjusted to meet the new strategic realities. The review we propose will be foreign policy led, first assessing our likely overseas commitments and interests and then establishing how our forces should be deployed to meet them.

Arms control
A new Labour government will retain Trident. We will press for multilateral negotiations towards mutual, balanced and verifiable reductions in nuclear weapons. When satisfied with verified progress towards our goal of the global elimination of nuclear weapons, we will cease that British nuclear weapons are included in multilateral negotiations.

Britain to sign the Social Chapter
An empty chair at the negotiating table is disastrous for Britain. The Social Chapter is a framework under which legislative measures can be agreed. Only two measures have been agreed: consultation for employees of large European-wide companies and entitlement to unpaid parental leave. Successful companies already work closely with their workforces. The Social Chapter cannot be used to force the harmonisation of social security or tax legislation and it does not cost jobs. We will use our participation to promote employability and flexibility, not high social costs.

The single currency
Any decision about Britain joining the single currency must be determined by a hard-headed assessment of Britain's economic interests. Only Labour can be trusted to do this; the Tories are riven by

faction. But there are formidable obstacles in the way of Britain being in the first wave of membership. If European monetary union takes place on January 1, 1999, what is essential for the success of EMU is genuine convergence among the economies that take part, without any fudging of the rules. However, to exclude British membership of EMU forever would be to destroy any influence we have over a process which will affect us whether we are in or out. We must therefore play a full part in the debate to influence it in Britain's interests.

In any event, there are three pre-conditions which would have to be satisfied before Britain could join during the next Parliament: first, the Cabinet would have to agree; then Parliament; and finally the people would have to say "Yes" in a referendum.

Strong defence through Nato
The post-Cold War world faces a range of new security challenges — proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the growth of ethnic nationalism and extremism, international terrorism, and crime and drug trafficking. A new Labour government will build a strong defence against these threats. Our security will continue to be based on Nato.

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Labour will work for the effective implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention and for a strengthening of the Biological Weapons Convention. Labour will ban the import, export, transfer and manufacture of all forms of anti-personnel landmines. We will introduce an immediate moratorium on their use. Labour will not permit the sale of arms to regimes that might use them for internal repression or international aggression. We will increase the transparency and accountability of decisions on export licences for arms. And we will support an EU code of conduct governing arms sales.

We support a strong UK defence industry, which is a strategic part of our industrial base as well as our defence effort. We believe that part of its expertise can be extended to civilian use through a defence diversification agency.

Leadership in the international community

A new Labour government will use Britain's permanent seat on the Security Council to press for substantial reform of the United Nations, including an early resolution of its funding crisis, and a more effective role in peacekeeping, conflict prevention, the protection of human rights and safeguarding the global environment.

The Commonwealth provides Britain with a unique network of contacts linked by history, language and legal systems. Labour is committed to giving renewed priority to the Commonwealth in our foreign relations. We will seize the opportunity to increase trade and economic co-operation and will also build alliances with our Commonwealth partners to promote reform at the UN and common action on the global environment. Britain has a real opportunity to provide leadership in the Commonwealth when we host the heads of government meeting in Britain at the end of 1997.

Promoting economic and social development

Labour will also attach much higher priority to combating global poverty and underdevelopment. According to the World Bank, there are 1.3 billion people in the world who live in absolute poverty, subsisting on less than \$1 (60p) a day, while 35,000 children die each day from readily preventable diseases.

Labour believes that we have a clear moral responsibility to help combat global poverty. In government we will strengthen and restructure the British aid programme and bring development issues back into the mainstream of government decision-making. A Cabinet minister will lead a new department of international development.

We will shift aid resources towards programmes that help the poorest people in the poorest countries. We reaffirm the UK's commitment to the 0.7 per cent UN aid target and in government Labour will start to reverse the decline in UK aid spending.

We will work for greater consistency between the aid, trade, agriculture and economic reform policies of the EU. We will use our leadership position in the EU to maintain and enhance the position of the poorest countries during the renegotiation of the Lomé Convention.

We will support further measures to reduce the debt burden borne by the world's poorest countries and to ensure that developing countries are given a fair deal in international trade.

It is our aim to join Unesco. We will consider how this can be done most effectively and will ensure that the cost is met from savings elsewhere.

Human rights

Labour wants Britain to be respected in the world for the integrity with which it conducts its foreign relations. We will make protection and promotion of human rights a central part of our foreign policy. We will work for the creation of a permanent international criminal court to investigate genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

A new environmental internationalism

Labour believes that the threats to the global climate should push environmental concerns higher up the international agenda. A Labour government will strengthen co-operation in the European Union on environmental issues, including climate change and ozone depletion. We will lead the fight against global warming, through our target of a 20 per cent reduction in carbon dioxide emissions by 2010.

Labour believes the international environment should be safeguarded in negotiations over international trade. We will also work for the successful negotiation of a new protocol on climate change to be completed in Japan in 1997.

Leadership, not isolation

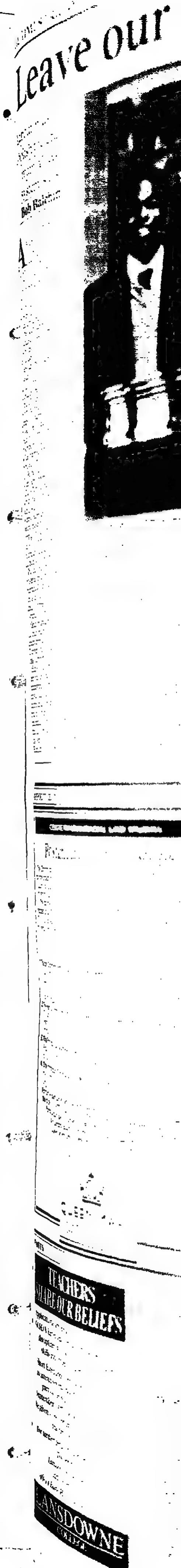
There is a sharp divide between those who believe the way to cope with global change is for nations to retreat into isolationism and protectionism, and those who believe in internationalism and engagement. Labour has traditionally been the party of internationalism. Britain cannot be strong at home if it is weak abroad. The tragedy of the Conservative years has been the squandering of Britain's assets and the loss of Britain's influence.

A new Labour government will use these assets to the full to restore Britain's pride and influence as a leading force for good in the world. We will effective leadership and clear vision. Britain could once again be at the centre of international decision-making instead of at its margins.

FIVE ELECTION PLEDGES

This manifesto contains the detail of our plans. We have promised only what we know we can deliver. Britain deserves better and the following five election pledges will be the first steps towards a better Britain. If you would like to help us build that better Britain, join us by calling 0900 300 900.

- cut class sizes to 30 or under for 5, 6 and 7 year-olds by using money from the assisted places scheme
- fast-track punishment for persistent young offenders by halving the time from arrest to sentencing
- cut NHS waiting lists by treating an extra 100,000 patients as a first step by releasing £100 million saved from NHS red tape
- get 250,000 under-25 year-olds off benefit and into work by using money from a windfall levy on the privatised utilities
- no rise in income tax rates, cut VAT on heating to 5 per cent and inflation and interest rates as low as possible





Can your school match this filmstrip? Colin Firth and Ruth Gemmell star in *Fever Pitch*, the story of a schoolteacher who is crazy about Arsenal Football Club

A first-class act to follow

If the staff at Film Education have their way, secondary school classrooms will soon echo to the sound of teenage movie moguls "pitching" script ideas and arguing over the best way to promote a blockbuster.

In the wake of *The English Patient's* nine Oscar triumphs, Film Education, the ten-year-old charity which produces material used by thousands of teachers, is making its own, potentially significant contribution to the British film industry.

With funding from the Cinema Exhibitors' Association and Barclays Bank, it has produced *The Film Industry*: three television documentaries and a detailed teaching pack, designed to show pupils how the professionals do everything from selling a screenplay to managing a multiplex.

With the media now a compulsory component of the national curriculum, film-related studies are gaining an increasingly firm foothold in the timetable. Out of school hours, more than one million 11 to

Daniel Rosenthal reports on an initiative that could produce the next generation of British Oscar winners

18-year-olds go to the cinema at least twice a month.

However, according to Film Education's Amanda White, only a handful are familiar with the wheeling, dealing and plain hard work that lie behind the on-screen action; more importantly, nor are their teachers.

"Teachers of media, communications and business feel that demystifying the film industry is a crucial part of their work," says Miss White. "But a shortage of suitable material has meant many of them do not have a firm enough grasp of the business."

"Our aim is to help them to provide students with a clear understanding of the wide range of roles that exist within the film industry. The kids all want to be Spike Lee or Martin Scorsese, but we want them to appreciate that behind the glamour of film-making, there is a lot of financial risk and old-fashioned teamwork."

The *Producer's Tale*, the first of the three half-hour Film Industry programmes, was transmitted in BBC2's *Learning Zone* in the early hours of Wednesday, to be repeated April 9, 16 and 23. Documentaries on distribution and exhibition follow in May and June, and 21,000 free copies of the accompanying teaching packs are on the way.

Beyond their short-term value for pupils' GCSE and A-level studies, prominent industry figures believe such exercises can help to train the next generation of British movie-makers and backers.

Rebecca O'Brien, who appears in *The Producer's Tale*, discussing her work as producer of Ken Loach's award-winning *Land and Freedom*, says: "If you want to get into this business, knowing the nuts and bolts of how a movie reaches the screen is just as important as having seen lots of films."

Each section also contains tasks lifted straight from what Miss White calls "the gritty-gritty" of the

movie business. Acting as producers, pupils have to devise a film idea and then convince investors (played by their classmates) to put up millions of dollars; as distributors they must construct a trailer for a new release; as exhibitors, they must choose a viable site for a new cinema complex.

Producers are not the only professionals to have been impressed by the teaching pack. The text is so clear and concise that a firm of entertainment lawyers has started using it as an induction pack for trainees, and the boss of one cinema chain always keeps his copy within easy reach.

Another of *The Producer's Tale* interviewees, Nik Powell, executive producer of the screen version of Nick Hornby's *Four Days in July*, which opens today, says: "This initiative will not make an impact in terms of recruitment, because there has never been a shortage of young people. But there are no real training routes into the business. 'The Film Industry' will help students through the fog that surrounds the complex and idiosyncratic structures of this business. The better educated people are, the better the British films we will produce."

Like many of the angrier critics of the education establishment, Dr Macmillan is inclined to overstate her case. "In general terms, one may find oneself wondering if it is possible that educational bureaucrats, teacher trainers, teachers' unions and organisations, in collaboration with book publishers and assisted by the rapid turnover of Secretaries of State for Education, may have conspired over a number of years to weave a complex veil of orthodoxy that has functioned most effectively to obscure the facts."

Dr Macmillan is a Canadian researcher living in London, believes that the causes can be found in the way children have been taught to read over the past two decades. Her book, published by the Institute of Economic Affairs, places the blame on teachers' reluctance to use phonics, the traditional method of teaching reading by decoding words from individual letter sounds.

Dr Macmillan's study, as one might expect from a right-wing think-tank, is polemic as much as research: its extensive survey highlights evidence to support her theory and ignores most of the rest. But, with the importance of phonics in the teaching of reading now well-established, the suggestion that previous practice may have had such an effect deserves attention.

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Boys, it's a chronic decline of phonics

New research claims to show why boys trail at school. John O'Leary reports

While attention focused on the teacher unions and politicians early this week, an intriguing theory emerged about the root cause of the growing gender gap in educational performance.

The reasons for girls' increasing superiority has been a source of unending debate. Everything from the style of assessment to cultural shifts and an apparent decline in boys' self-esteem has been cited, but there has been no explanation for the phenomenon's gradual movement up the age range.

Young girls have always done better than boys, mainly, it is thought, because they mature more quickly. Even at GCSE, girls have been the traditional leaders in all but the sciences, and even that is changing. A-level has gone the same way and female students are winning the lion's share of the top degrees.

Bonnie Macmillan, a Canadian researcher living in London, believes that the causes can be found in the way children have been taught to read over the past two decades. Her book, published by the Institute of Economic Affairs, places the blame on teachers' reluctance to use phonics, the traditional method of teaching reading by decoding words from individual letter sounds.

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Publishers, who normally escape the attentions of traditionalist critics, are at the heart of Dr Macmillan's thesis. The reading schemes used by most schools are usually seen as evidence that teachers are not in thrall to progressive methods, but she argues the opposite. Because the books encourage whole-word recognition, they are actually minimising the use of phonics.

Naturally, the publishers deny this, and teachers insist that they do not slavishly follow the reading schemes alone. But other studies support the view that primary schools' claims to be using a mixture of techniques to teach reading (as the national curriculum requires) have disguised an under-use of phonics in many cases.

Dr Macmillan is certain that this is still the position in most schools, although her book by no means proves it. Whether or not it is, there can be little doubt that the use of phonics declined in the 1980s and the early years of this decade, when reading standards appear to have dropped. Can this have had a differential impact on boys and a knock-on effect for later learning?

Dr Macmillan cites evidence that developmental differences between the sexes put boys at greater risk of reading problems: boys have a shorter attention span in the first years of school and are slower to acquire language skills.

The absence of a widening gender gap in Scotland, where traditional methods have continued to hold sway, is used to support her view that the use of "look-and-say" techniques in England has put boys at a particular disadvantage.

From this conclusion, it is but a short step to attribute later educational failure to boys' poor foundations. In the crucial primary years, when girls, in any case, are developing more quickly, boys are still struggling to master the basics and never catch up.

The theory requires more evidence than Dr Macmillan has provided in her book, but it should not be discounted.

Why schoolchildren can't read by Bonnie Macmillan; published by the IEA, 2 Lord North Street, London SW1P 3LB; £12.

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Wasp's hope
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Nagging suspicion that a star has been born

Day five of Channel 5, a fitting moment to unveil one of its more credible scheduling weapons. So, for the millions of you who presumably missed *Nancy Lam*, let me fill you in. Nancy Lam is a cook and after last night's debut a television cook. Television cooks mean only one thing: gimmicks.

The problem is finding a new one. She's plumpish, but nothing to rival the *Two Fat Ladies*. She's oriental, which presumably is why BBC2 is defensively running repeats of Ken Hom directly against her. She berates her silent husband and sous-chef, in a manner that Fanny Craddock would undoubtedly approve of, and she's rude to the customers in her restaurant, although surely not even Keith Floyd can have mopped down a diner's glistening brow with the punter's own tie.

So far, so unprecedented. What does that leave? Born in Singapore

to an Indonesian mother and a Chinese father, Lam has an accent that now and again renders her totally incomprehensible (was "yam-yam" an ingredient or a culinary assessment?). But then, so too did that French-Canadian chef, who occasionally popped up in the afternoon to go four courses with the English language. Then there's her laugh, which is loud and memorable... just like Rusty Lee's on TV-am. All of which leaves, I think, only her spectacles, which are big, blue and magically never steam up. Anybody remember any other myopic television chefs? With built-in de-misters?

Lam explained last night that there was nothing wrong with nagging her spouse. "He's my husband, I'm allowed to give him a hard time — and he's allowed to give me a hard time too." But not, apparently, on her show. All the much put-upon Ben did was say goodbye. And all the chopping.

The cooking — which one hopes is still the important bit — appeared relatively straightforward and made encouraging use of packets and jars, the sort of thing that Lam repeatedly assured us could be found in "any oriental supermarket". But unless you feel up to mimicking her accent at the counter, it might be a help if one or two of the more exotic ingredients were captioned. As indeed it might be if some of her pearls of oriental wisdom were, too. It's OK to dream when grinding peanuts, but not when cutting carrots. Makes some sort of sense, I suppose.

Which is more than can be said for *Mad About Machines* (Channel 4). I can't quite decide whether it was bad or simply unexpected. Malcolm Hemley, you see, sounded like a man after my own heart — his two passions in life are trees and Dennis Lawmowers. Passion

REVIEW



Matthew Bond

might be a bit strong in my case, but I've been known to hug a hazel or two in my time and ever since a formative experience with a disassembled lawnmower engine at a country show (sans roller, sans blades, it still chugged bravely away) I've been able to see a certain beauty in grass-cutting too. But while I take such pleasures vicariously, Hemley — his Dorset home surrounded by acres of

lawned and wood garden — lives them. Cue sunny days, gleaming machines and Peter Gabriel singing "I'm just a lawnmower, you tell me by the way I walk".

Not a bit. Cue a very mournful and not particularly well shot film, that included the memorable question "Do you ever think about life after your mother dies?" Hemley did, but not much ("I'd have to do my own washing"). He had more important things on his mind: "If I can get most of my raking done today, I will be very pleased."

What Taghi Amirani's film appeared to be suffering from was a bad case of season-lag. Here we were, basking in the sunniest Easter for years and there were Amirani and Hemley lost in the mist and muck of autumn. Somewhere in all that mist and muck they also managed to lose most of the mowers. Hemley apparently has 32 of them, but we saw just two: one that worked splendidly

and one — his first machine — that didn't work at all. The rest were hidden away under sacks in a very dark Nissen hut. Not ideal in a film about lawnmowers.

Amirani's film, however, was no longer about lawnmowers. He had been distracted by the obvious pathos potential in a middle-aged man who devotedly nursed his father until his death three years ago and who now lives with his elderly but doting mother. Hemley, like any enthusiast whose interest has become an obsession, was a soft target and surely deserved more than to be cast as a grass-cutting version of J.R. Hardy, as he tried to track down the vital part — an ML Magenta, type CMAK — that would get that first Dennis (a birthday gift from his father) back on the lawns. This being real life, and not an advertisement for *Yellow Pages*, there was no happy ending.

No happy ending either for Original Sin (ITV), but certainly a devilishly complicated one. In the best traditions of the genre, the baddie turned out to be the least likely of the original suspects in the inapparently innocent House and the motive turned out to be firmly anchored in the past. As we had spent two-and-a-half episodes floundering around in the present, this was a little frustrating — and not just for Commander Dalgleish.

But while we were left wondering how the guilty party could die in seconds from self-inflicted burns (it always takes hours in *ER* or *Casualty*) and various other eccentricities of plot (why had Esme Carling so conveniently told her young neighbour everything?) there is no doubt that Thursday nights will be all the poorer for having ITV's latest whodunnit so stylishly resolved. Still, dare say there'll be another one along soon.

- BBC1**
- 6.00am Business Breakfast (44907)
 - 7.00am BBC Breakfast News (7) (40365)
 - 9.00am Breakfast News Extra (7) (825583)
 - 9.20am Sky Challenge (377604)
 - 9.45 Kilo (2304452)
 - 10.30am Can't Cook, Won't Cook (91655)
 - 11.00am News (7) and weather (4927487)
 - 11.05am The Really Useful Show (9397278)
 - 11.35am Change Two (6711452)
 - 12.00pm News (7) Regional News and weather (4521655)
 - 12.05pm Call My Bluff (5173384)
 - 12.35pm Good Living (9904655)
 - 1.00pm News (7) and weather (612855)
 - 1.35pm Regional News (50622758)
 - 1.45pm The Weather Show (3032246)
 - 1.50pm Neighbours (7) (2296094)
 - 2.15pm Columbo: A Matter of Honour With Peter Falk as the detective on holiday in a Mexican resort, whose police is disrupted by a murder inquiry involving the world of bullfighting (4817004)
 - 3.30pm House and Mole (9914348) 3.35pm Playdays (218636) 3.55pm Bodger and Badger (8379742) 4.10pm A Very Peculiar Family (830655) 4.35pm Clarissa Explains It All (7631655) 5.00pm Newsround (7) (5382704) 5.10pm Blue Peter (7) (8481425)
 - 5.35pm Neighbours (7) (225181)
 - 6.00pm News (7) and weather (87)
 - 6.30pm Regional News (839)
 - 7.00pm Big Break Snooker stars Steve Davis, David Roe and Alistair Hoggins accept Jim Davidson's challenge (7) (2758)
 - 7.30pm Top of the Pops presented by Mark Radcliffe and Marc Riley (7) (723)
 - 8.00pm Porridge Fletch lands himself in the prison hospital, sharing a ward with old Blanco. Classic comedy, with Ronnie Barker and David Jason (7) (5278)
 - 8.30pm A Question of Sport Joining David Coleman and team captain Ally McCoist and John Pugh this week are national hunt jockey Richard Dunwoody, world speedway champion Billy Hamill, cricketer Robert Croft and Rangers and Scottish international Stuart McCall (7) (7013)
 - 9.00pm News (7) and weather (8659)
 - 10.00pm Silent Witness Sam and Sandra's unlikely budding romance is put on hold when a brutal and apparently random murder demands both their attention. Amanda Burton and Mick Ford star (428636)
 - 10.30pm High Plains Drifter (1973) starring and directed by Clint Eastwood. A mysterious stranger rides into Lago, a small frontier town in the American southwest. He is provoked into a fight where he kills three men. The townsfolk beg him to become their sheriff as they live in fear of an armed gang (7) (8055574)
 - 12.30pm The George Rat Story (1961, b/w) Biography of the Hollywood tough guy, charting his beginnings as a hoodler with gangland connections to his heyday as one of the silver screen's most feared tough guys. Starring Ray Danton, Joseph M. Newman directed (442765)
 - 2.15pm Weather (3424853)

- BBC2**
- 6.00am Managing Public Services: All Change? (2551365) 6.25pm The Dynamics of Teams (2563100) 6.50pm Bulls, Bears and China Shops (1372177) 7.15pm See Hear Breakfast News (835278) 7.30pm Secret Life of Toys (2630013) 7.45pm The Raccoons (4434988) 8.10pm Wacky Races (3331810) 8.30pm Young People's Specials: Andrew (79433) 9.00pm Active (3378101) 9.25pm Sweet Valley High (373617) 9.50pm Funybones (5552355) 10.00pm Tellybugs (45407) 10.30pm Baber (92927) 11.00pm The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles (23655)
 - 12.30pm Working Lunch (52461) 1.00pm Secret Life of Toys (20649182) 1.15pm A-Z of Food (22770452) 1.25pm Ales Smith and Jones (2687336)
 - 2.15pm Racing from Aintree Julian Wilson introduces the second day of the 1997 Grand National Meeting, including the 2.35, 3.10, 3.45 and 4.20 races (85948278) 4.45pm A-Z of Food (822029) 4.55pm Esther With school inspector Gervase Phinn (9015433) 5.30pm Today's the Day (888) 6.00pm The Simpsons (48258)
 - 6.25pm Star Trek: Voyager opportunity Harry Mudd programmes an android to take control of the Enterprise (7) (245749)
 - 7.10pm Pole to Pole Michael Palin's journey through southern Africa is beset by minor mishaps — but he has shocking news on his arrival in Johannesburg (7) (7) (953128) Followed by Video Nation Election Shorts
 - 8.00pm A Gaffer's Travels With Peter Allen A six-part series in which Allen travels the world in search of diverse golfing locations (652)
 - 8.30pm Gardeners' World Alan Titchmarsh lays the groundwork for his butterfly garden at Barleywood, Stephen Leach goes to Holland to explore the Dutch passion for penicilline and Roy Lancaster checks out the amazing wealth of garden plants in South Africa (7) (5655)
 - 9.00pm Rab C Nesbitt Trouble looms in the Nesbitt household as Rab realises he's not in love with Mary (7) (4907)
 - 9.30pm Grand National Tales On the eve of 150th Grand National, Desmond Lynam looks at the horses and jockeys who have made their names on the world-famous race (7) (10348). Video Nation Shorts (482487)
 - 10.30pm Newsnight presented by Jeremy Paxman (7) (50758)
 - 11.30pm Space: Above and Beyond An underground raid goes badly wrong — and it's only Damphousse's amazing intuition which keeps the soldiers alive (420549)
 - 12.15pm This Life (7) (6183834)
 - 1.00pm Later Presents the Beautiful South (7) (807747)
 - 2.10-2.15pm Weather (17259)

- HTV**
- 6.00am GMTV (6845100)
 - 9.25pm Chain Letters (7) (2035636)
 - 9.55pm London Today (7)
 - 10.00pm The Time, the Place (21471)
 - 10.30pm This Morning (7) (645471)
 - 12.20pm Regional News (7) (990452)
 - 12.30pm News (7) and weather (990452)
 - 12.55pm Our House (990471) 1.25pm Home and Away (7) (6437346) 1.50pm Murder, She Wrote (553181) 2.50pm Garden Calendar (517342)
 - 3.20pm News (7) (825742) 3.25pm Regional News (7) (782013)
 - 3.30pm Rosie and Jim (6361723) 3.40pm Slim Pig (9929278) 3.50pm Cartoon Time (918162) 4.00pm Zzzap! (400636) 4.15pm Jumanji (7) (836094) 4.40pm Crazy Cottage (8446094)
 - 6.10pm A Country Practice (157723)
 - 6.40pm News (7) and weather (571487)
 - 6.50pm Home and Away (7) (450094)
 - 6.55pm HTV Weather (796520)
 - 6.50pm HTV News (7) (907)
 - 7.00pm Emeraldale The Dingles venture into the transport business, Frank confronts Chris over his betrayal (7) (41395)
 - 7.30pm Coronation Street Derek finds himself driven to distraction and Florie is surprised when Steve turns up on her doorstep unannounced (7) (891)
 - 8.00pm The Bill Jarvis and Rawton investigate a ram raid and the shop owner discovers that having a trophy wife will cost him more than just money (7) (7966)
 - 8.30pm You've Been Framed (7) (2181)
 - 9.00pm The Grand New period drama series, set in a luxury hotel after the Second World War. With Tim Healy, Susan Hampshire and Mark McCann (7) (5007)
 - 10.00pm News (7) and weather (8704)
 - 10.30pm HTV News (7) and weather (537159)
 - 10.40pm Hotel (840094)
 - 11.15pm At the Albert (316636)
 - 12.15pm Box Office America Jazz pianist and specialist of British modern jazz, Stanley Tacey and his quartet at the "Albert" music pub in Bristol (321389)
 - 12.40pm Murder by Night (1968) with Robert Urich, Jay Lenz and Michael Ironside. The only witness to a vicious murder is knocked unconscious at the scene, suffering from amnesia the police are left to him to remember the grisly details. Directed by Paul Lynch (701940)
 - 12.55pm Club Nation (542530)
 - 3.20pm Funky Bunker (8779327)
 - 4.00pm Collins and Macneil's Movie Club (7) (30388414)
 - 4.50pm Recollections (2162308)
 - 5.00pm Coronation Street (7) (26308)
 - 5.30pm News (70853)

- CENTRAL**
- As HTV West except:
 - 12.55pm-1.25pm A Country Practice (990471)
 - 1.50pm Savannah (235181)
 - 2.50-3.20pm Our House (517342)
 - 5.10-5.40pm Shortland Street (175723)
 - 6.25-7.00pm Central News (503981)
 - 10.40pm Central Weekend Live (4488988)
 - 12.00pm Weekly World News (3613018)
 - 12.35pm Pasty Bunker (7129308)
 - 1.35pm Baywatch (4060969)
 - 2.35pm Cyber Cafe (3097747)
 - 3.00pm Collins and Macneil's Movie Club (46681105)
 - 3.25pm Dating the Enemy (4892124)
- WESTCOUNTRY**
- As HTV West except:
 - 12.55pm Home and Away (990471)
 - 1.25pm Emeraldale (70973365)
 - 1.55pm Blue Heelers (1543907)
 - 2.45-3.20pm Gardeners' Diary (4451094)
 - 5.10-5.40pm Home and Away (175723)
 - 6.00-7.00pm Westcountry Live (12636)
 - 10.40pm Film: The Gauntlet (88871162)
- MERIDIAN**
- As HTV West except:
 - 12.55-1.25pm A Country Practice (990471)
 - 1.55pm Savannah (2543100)
 - 2.50pm Go Wild in the Country: The Making of Wind in the Willows (517342)
 - 5.10-5.40pm Home and Away (175723)
 - 6.00-7.00pm Meridian Tonight (12636)
 - 10.30pm Meridian News and Weather (96181)
 - 10.45pm Highlander (166510)
 - 11.40pm A405 (375520)
 - 12.00pm Campus Cops (5687150)
 - 5.00pm Freeform (26308)
- ANGLIA**
- As HTV West except:
 - 12.55-1.25pm A Country Practice (990471)
 - 1.55pm Savannah (2543100)
 - 2.50-3.20pm Liza's Country (517342)
 - 5.10-5.40pm Shortland Street (175723)
 - 6.25-7.00pm Anglia News (503981)
 - 10.40pm Film: The Gauntlet (88871162)
- S4C**
- 6.00am Sesame Street (37617) 7.00am The Big Breakfast (30705) 8.00pm Bewitched (68181) 9.30pm Sister Sister (8900029) 9.55pm Hangin' with Mr. Cooper (7358817) 10.20pm Crystal Maze (7655988) 11.20pm Earthworm Jim (4825433) 11.45pm The Pink Panther (8676340) 12.00pm Fresh Pop (4514365) 12.05pm California Dreams (9608617) 12.30pm Light Lunch with Ben Elton and Sue Lawrence, a Masterchef (65425) 1.30pm Pat and Mat Animation (22036618) 1.55pm Sunday Dinner for a Soldier (1944, b/w) with Anne Baxter, John Hodiak and Charles Winninger. A comedy drama about a poor family living on a Los Angeles houseboat who invite a soldier to their home. Directed by Lloyd Bacon (7) (42025471)
 - 3.30pm Travelling Light Tim Grundy and Peter Hamilton visit Glenageary, Fort William and the Isle of Skye (7) (823) 4.00pm Fifteen to One (7) (520) 4.30pm Countdown (7) (704) 5.00pm Ricki Lake (2704) 5.30pm The Real Holiday Show (7) (384)
 - 6.00pm TFI Friday Music is provided by Depeche Mode, Supergrass and Texas (10278)
 - 7.00pm Channel 4 News (7) (729549)
 - 7.55pm Thatcher's Children (825655)
 - 8.00pm The Lost Gardens of Heligan (4/8) The four walled acres of the productive gardens (7) (8988)
 - 8.30pm Brookside Mick is the bearer of bad news and Jimmy explains about the baby (7) (2033)
 - 9.00pm Caroline in the City Del and Caroline's romantic weekend is disrupted by a chance meeting with Del's embittered former wife (7) (8075)
 - 9.30pm Spin City Mike stands in for the mayor on Cross Street, a top-rated TV show (7) (15723)

- CHANNEL 4**
- 6.00am Sesame Street The guest is Michael Chang (37617) 7.00am The Big Breakfast (30705) 9.00pm Bewitched (7) (88181) 9.30pm Sister Sister (7) (8900029) 9.55pm Hangin' with Mr. Cooper (7) (7358817) 10.20pm Crystal Maze (7) (7655988) 11.20pm Earthworm Jim (7) (4825433) 11.45pm The Pink Panther (7) (8676340) 12.00pm Fresh Pop (4514365) 12.05pm California Dreams (9608617) 12.30pm Light Lunch with Ben Elton and Sue Lawrence, a Masterchef (65425) 1.30pm Pat and Mat Animation (22036618) 1.55pm Sunday Dinner for a Soldier (1944, b/w) with Anne Baxter, John Hodiak and Charles Winninger. A comedy drama about a poor family living on a Los Angeles houseboat who invite a soldier to their home. Directed by Lloyd Bacon (7) (42025471)
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 - 9.00pm Caroline in the City Del and Caroline's romantic weekend is disrupted by a chance meeting with Del's embittered former wife (7) (8075)
 - 9.30pm Spin City Mike stands in for the mayor on Cross Street, a top-rated TV show (7) (15723)

- CHANNEL 5**
- 6.00am 5 News Early (7077520)
 - 7.30am Havalazoo Magazine for pre-school children (2104278)
 - 8.00am Adventures of the Bush Patrol Drama series about a group of youngsters (2722907)
 - 8.30am Wildworld (2721278)
 - 9.00am Espresso Magazine (5894029)
 - 10.00am Exclusive (9302878)
 - 10.30am Nancy Lam Cookery with Nancy Lam and her husband Ben (7) (2374742)
 - 11.00am Leesa, Chat show (9961626)
 - 11.50pm Espresso Update (45528471)
 - 12.00pm The Bold and the Beautiful Los Angeles soap (7) (2725094)
 - 12.30pm Family Affairs (7) (9608610)
 - 1.00pm 5 News Update (92839346)
 - 1.05pm Sunset Beach (7) (6724520)
 - 2.00pm 5's Company Entertainment show (282425)
 - 3.30pm Bye Bye Birdie (1963) starring Dick Van Dyke and Janet Leigh. Musical based on Elsie Frelley's experience of the US Army draft. Directed by George Sidney (7086369)
 - 5.30pm 100 Per Cent Game show (1671018)
 - 6.00pm White Collar (7) (1578928)
 - 6.30pm Family Affairs Nick has a surprise for Chris (7) (159278)



Jono Coleman, Julia Bradbury (7.00)

- 7.00pm Exclusive News from the world of entertainment presented by Jono Coleman and Julia Bradbury (1578928)
- 7.30pm White Collar The work of wildlife sanctuary. Featuring the desperate attempts to save a deer and a fox cub (155162)
- 8.00pm Attractions Presented by Philippa Forrester and Tim Vincent, with the week's guest the English rugby captain, Phil de Glanville (1588810)
- 8.30pm 5 News (157487)
- 9.00pm Family Business (1989) starring Sean Connery, Dustin Hoffman and Matthew Broderick. Impassable but entertaining holiday film. Directed by Sidney Lumet (1182549)
- 11.00pm The Jack Docherty Show (9171931)
- 11.40pm Club Class Comedy show (2876384)
- 12.00pm News and Sport (2178678)
- 12.15pm Stay Hungry (1978) with Jeff Bridges, Sally Field and Arnold Schwarzenegger. Comedy drama set in a bodybuilding gym. Directed by Bob Fosse (1196699)
- 2.10pm Wyatt Earp: Return to Tombstone (1993) with Hugh O'Brian and Bruce Boxenberger. The gunfighter returns to his old stomping ground. Directed by Frank McDonald and Paul Landres (5045660)
- 3.30pm Laurie's Law (8500691)
- 4.40pm Prisoner: Cell Block H (1200655)
- 5.30pm 100 Per Cent (2427259)

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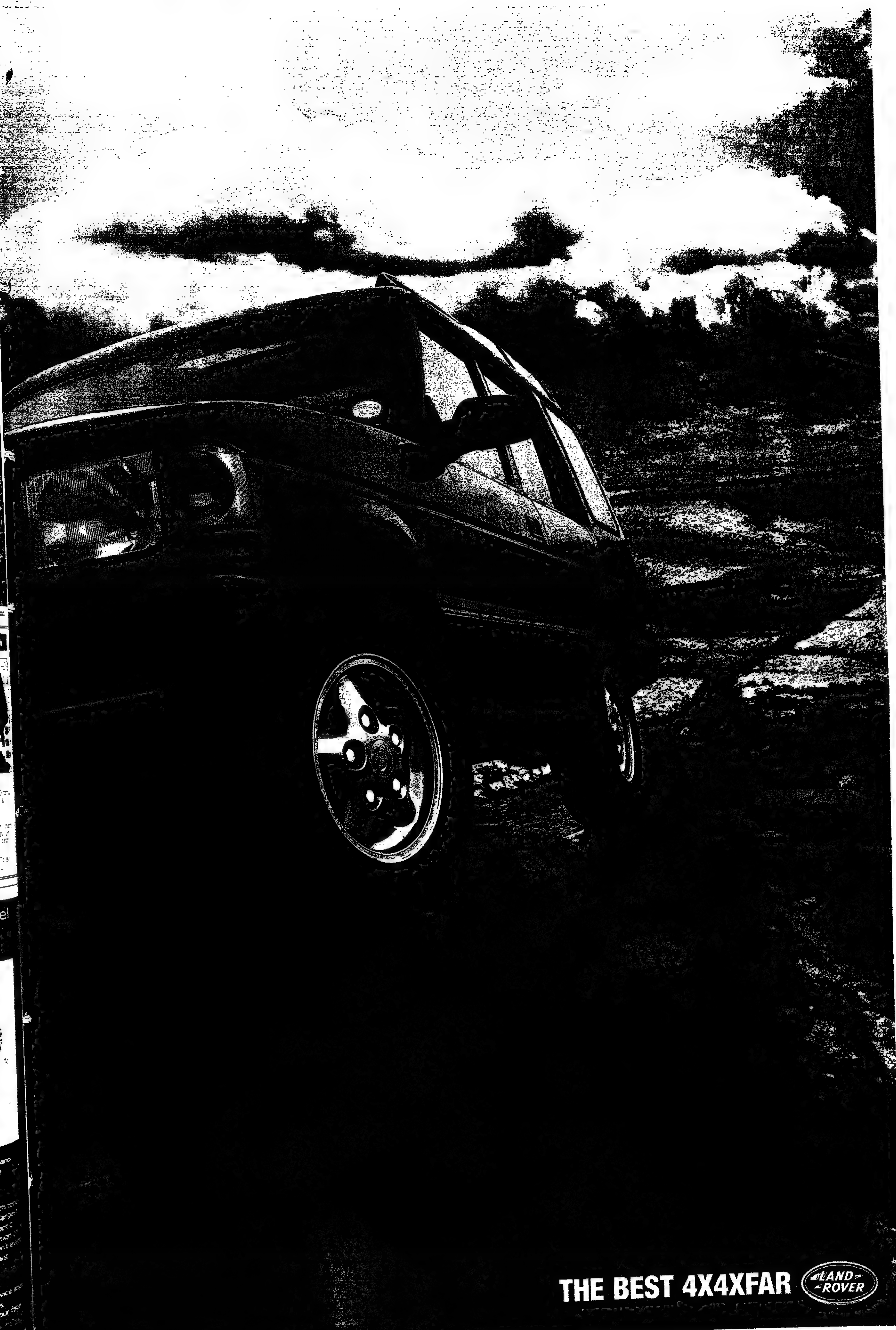
- 6.00am Morning Glory (30031) 8.00am People and Places (14278) 10.00am Another World (7348) 11.00pm Days of Our Lives (88810) 12.00pm Oprah Winfrey (8659)
- 1.00pm Oprah Winfrey (8659) 2.00pm Sally Jessy Raphael (7678) 3.00pm Jenny Jones (76742) 4.00pm Oprah Winfrey (8659) 5.00pm Star Trek: The Next Generation (3075) 6.00pm Real TV (9265) 6.30pm Married... with Children (8407) 7.00pm The Simpsons (4704) 7.30pm M*A*S*H (9055) 8.00pm JAG (80229) 9.00pm Walker, Texas Ranger (97365) 10.00pm High Incident (90452) 11.00pm Sokei Scott (85778) 11.30pm Star Trek: The Next Generation (3075) 12.00am LAPD (8263) 1.00am Hi Hat (823414)
- 2.00pm Beverly Hills 90210 (1922348) 3.00pm Melrose Place (191034) 4.00pm Pacific Drive (102478) 10.00pm Tales from the Crypt (88265) 11.00pm Late Show (644829) 12.00pm Hi Hat (823414)

SKY NEWS

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- 6.00am Medicine River (1893) (89094)
- 8.00pm The Secret Invasion (1984) (46758)
- 10.00pm The Wind and the Lion (1974) (51579) 12.00pm Cowman (1897) (71612)
- 1.30pm Play of the Week (1971) (7051382) 2.15pm The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 3.00pm The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 4.00pm The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 5.00pm The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 6.00pm The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 7.00pm The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 8.00pm The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 9.00pm The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 10.00pm The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 11.00pm The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 12.00pm The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 1.00am The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 2.00am The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 3.00am The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 4.00am The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 5.00am The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 6.00am The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 7.00am The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 8.00am The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 9.00am The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 10.00am The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 11.00pm The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 12.00pm The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 1.00am The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 2.00am The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 3.00am The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 4.00am The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 5.00am The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 6.00am The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 7.00am The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 8.00am The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 9.00am The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 10.00pm The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 11.00pm The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 12.00pm The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 1.00am The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 2.00am The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 3.00am The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 4.00am The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 5.00am The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 6.00am The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 7.00am The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 8.00am The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 9.00am The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 10.00pm The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 11.00pm The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 12.00pm The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 1.00am The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 2.00am The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 3.00am The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 4.00am The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 5.00am The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 6.00am The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 7.00am The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 8.00am The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 9.00am The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 10.00pm The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 11.00pm The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 12.00pm The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 1.00am The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 2.00am The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 3.00am The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 4.00am The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 5.00am The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 6.00am The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 7.00am The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 8.00am The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 9.00am The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 10.00pm The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 11.00pm The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 12.00pm The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 1.00am The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 2.00am The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 3.00am The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 4.00am The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 5.00am The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 6.00am The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 7.00am The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 8.00am The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 9.00am The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 10.00pm The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 11.00pm The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 12.00pm The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 1.00am The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 2.00am The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 3.00am The Black Stallion (1979) (2655229) 4.00am The Black Stallion (

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Babes' army ready for battle with the old guard

Carol Midgley on two Labour candidates hoping to give politics a fresh face



Lorna Fitzsimons: seeking to dislodge a Liberal Democrat 20 years her senior

WHEN a Labour government last came to power, Ruth Kelly and Lorna Fitzsimons were in primary school. Yesterday they were doing battle for Tony Blair's babes' army — the fresh-faced twenty-somethings recruited to use their youth, brains and spunky images to wrestle key marginal seats from older opponents.

Ms Kelly, who at 28 is the youngest candidate in the country to fight a key seat, will try to dislodge the Home Office Minister, Tom Sackville, 46, from Bolton West, which he has held for the Tories since 1983. Ms Fitzsimons, 29, is trying to oust Liz Lynne, a Liberal Democrat 20 years her senior, from Rochdale. Miss Lynne has responded by pointing to her rival's youth and inexperience, in contrast to her own record at Westminster.

The young challengers — educated, clean-cut and hard-working professionals — conform to the blueprint of a modern Labour candidate. Both are immaculately turned out, have combed hair and unblemished skin, in keeping with new party advice that candidates should be unfussy and businesslike in their appearance.

Ms Kelly, who last summer married Derek Gadd, a councillor in the London borough of Tower Hamlets, is expecting her first child in early June, four weeks after — she

hopes — having taken her seat at Westminster. Neither woman is old enough to remember the winter of discontent but both say that they are looking forward to a summer of success as servants of a Labour government. They see their youth as a weapon of power, not a disadvantage.

Ms Kelly, a manager dealing with European monetary union for the Bank of England, said: "Of all the people I have canvassed in Bolton West, no one has suggested that I am too young. I think being young is an advantage. People have lost their trust in politicians in Westminster but we are starting with a clean sheet. We are not tainted by any of the sleaze and we can genuinely claim to be in touch with the under-35s."

"You need a new young breed of MPs to reinstate the trust. The other day one woman who was complaining about corrupt MPs suddenly stopped and said, 'But I can't really blame you for that because you're so young, can you?'"

Ms Kelly, an Oxford graduate and former journalist for *The Guardian*, added that her pregnancy hardly made her blueprint material. "I wouldn't be pregnant now if I was a career politician, would I? These things are never exactly planned, but I am 28 and I never made any secret of the fact I wanted a



Ruth Kelly: believes that being young and in touch with the under-35s will be a big electoral advantage

family. I'm sure I'll manage — Harriet Harman was seven months pregnant when she was first elected. The Labour Party have been great about it."

Miss Fitzsimons, from Rochdale, is the youngest guest to have appeared on BBC Television's *Question Time*. Her modernist approach when she was president of the National Union of Students earned her the description of "bourgeois middle-class bitch" from far-left students. Wearing a black Next trouser suit and shirt,

she said that being smart was part of the working-class ethic. "Where I come from, putting your best clothes on — your Sunday best — is what you do when you want to make an effort for people you respect, as I do the people of Rochdale."

"If a PPC [prospective parliamentary candidate] can't be bothered to look smart, why should you be interested in voting for them? I haven't seen any party guidelines on how to dress — it's just how I was brought up. "As for being too young,

why do you have to wait until the age of 40 to offer your services to your country? It is the quality of dedication, not the age, which counts. I have the time and energy to devote."

"If the worst thing Liz Lynne can say about me is that I am 20 years younger than her, then she is in trouble. I am a moderniser, firmly in the Blair wing of the party, and I suppose I embody new Labour."

Many Labour candidates have been issued with guidelines on appearance for television interviews during the election campaign. Women are told to wear unfussy clothes and to avoid unfussy hairstyles and dangling earrings.

"Do try to look smart and businesslike: plains not patterns," say the guidelines. Men are told to take their jackets off and to wear foundation if they are prone to sweat under camera lights.

Miss Kelly, dressed in a navy suit, string of pearls and a crisp shirt, said that dress codes for an MP were common sense. "It is obvious that you don't wear jeans and a T-shirt to see your constituents. People have to trust the person they elect, so how you present yourself is important."

"But I haven't had anything from head office telling me what to wear. There are a lot more important issues to fight this election on than image."

Williams sets out pledges to the 'policy-minded' sex

Polly Newton on the Lib Dems' message to women

THE Liberal Democrats wooed women voters yesterday with a five-point pledge delivered by Baroness Williams of Crosby.

The party hopes that its education and health plans will capture the support of women, whom it believes are "less tribal" than men and more willing to give policies a fair hearing.

Baroness Williams promised fairer pensions for women; a better deal for part-time workers; lifelong access to education for women; an enhanced role for women in public life; and a better health service for women.

She said: "Women's votes and women's attitudes are extremely important. Women put much more emphasis on the quality of public services and rather less on the level of taxes as men do." The commitment to reintroduce free dental and eye checks was



Baroness Williams at a playgroup yesterday

"extremely important to women", she added.

About 23 million women are eligible to vote. Baroness Williams, who took the party message to a playgroup in Hammersmith, west London, yesterday, said that between a third and a quarter still had to decide which party to support.

Paddy Ashdown, the Liberal Democrat leader, said that too many women felt shut

out from the election. "They don't like the Punch and Judy style, they don't like the soundbites, and too often they don't hear any discussion of the policies which matter to them and their families."

In a special section of the manifesto aimed at women, the party will promise a gradual introduction of employment and pension rights to part-time employees and a strengthening of the law on domestic violence. Equal treatment of sexes within the NHS will be promised, with a promise to make it easier to see a woman doctor.

The party hopes to tackle the under-representation of women on public bodies by setting a target that, within a decade, at least one third of members should be women. The manifesto will also promise reform of Parliament to make it more accommodating to women and families.

Flotilla launch for Goldsmith

Sir James Goldsmith is to launch the Referendum Party's election campaign on Tuesday from Newlyn harbour in Cornwall. A flotilla of 100 fishing boats, flying the party flag, will leave the harbour when he fires a starting gun. Sir James will make a speech from the quayside and visit a seamen's mission. Trawlermen are expected to tell him of their concerns about the common fisheries policy.

Smith's successor

The Tory candidate to replace Tim Smith, who stood down in Beaconsfield after accepting payments in the cash-for-questions affair, will be chosen tomorrow. David Harris, St Ives MP for 14 years, and Tony Favell, John Major's former parliamentary private secretary, are in the running.

Homeless voters

Homeless people have been allowed to give their addresses as park benches or shop doorways so that they could vote. Norwich City Council agreed to register people with no fixed address provided that they specified where they were sleeping. Two people took advantage of the scheme.

Posters stolen

Police have been alerted in the constituency of Stroud, Gloucestershire, after 50 Labour election placards promoting the candidate, David Drew, were stolen. Party workers believe they may have been taken by political rivals. One said: "It could be an organised thing. A large number have disappeared."

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Nicholas Watt on the tactics being used in Gerry Adams's fight to regain his West Belfast seat

Sinn Fein seeks votes with vigilantes

IN THE shadows of the bleak Army bases that dominate the skyline of West Belfast, Sinn Fein has launched an election campaign with military precision to recapture Gerry Adams's old seat. Republicans more familiar with waging war against the "Brits" have been drafted in as Sinn Fein turns its forces against the SDLP's Dr Joe Hendron, who unseated Mr Adams in 1992.

In a brazen piece of electioneering, Sinn Fein has despatched masked gangs of vigilantes onto the streets to crack down on joy-riders. The vigilantes, who are equipped with spiked chains and walkie-talkies, have concentrated their efforts on the grim estates of Twinbrook and Poleglass, added to the West Belfast constituency under boundary changes.

A Sinn Fein team has compiled detailed breakdowns of potential supporters on lap-top computers as they try to overhaul Dr Hendron's slim majority of 589. Their numbers will be swelled by Sinn Fein supporters who are maintaining the republican tradition of "vote early, vote often" by making multiple entries on the electoral roll.

West Belfast, which tops Sinn Fein's list of four target

seats, is crucial to the party's strategy of achieving its greatest electoral success since the foundation of Northern Ireland in 1920. Mr Adams has calculated that if republicans win more than one seat the new government will face formidable pressure to relax its conditions for talking to Sinn Fein.

On paper Mr Adams should have little difficulty in recapturing his old seat, which he held from 1983-92, because the political fortunes of the SDLP have plummeted in West Belfast since Dr Hendron's victory. At last May's election to the Northern Ireland Forum, Sinn Fein virtually swept the board when it won 53.4 per cent of the vote compared with 26.5 per cent for the SDLP. The boundary changes will also help Mr Adams.

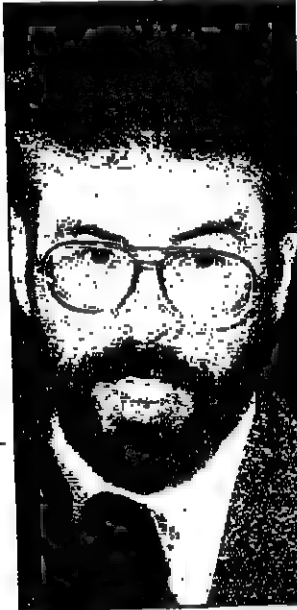
Sinn Fein, which is worried about complacency among its supporters, insists that the contest will be tight. The party knows that Dr Hendron enjoys a strong personal vote at parliamentary elections and that he can also count on the support of up to 4,000 Protestants in the Shankill area who will vote tactically to keep out Mr Adams.

The neck-and-neck race has created the bitterest contest of the election between Sinn Fein and the SDLP. Party workers on the ground see the sight of their opponents. Barely a day passes without a tussle between Mr Adams and Dr Hendron, who embody the opposing traditions of violent and constitutional nationalism. It is a far cry from the days of the IRA ceasefire when the leaders of the parties discussed an electoral pact.

Mr Adams, 48, stands at the apex of the republican movement, which has asserted its control over West Belfast through a relentless campaign of terror against the Catholic population. In contrast, the affable Dr Hendron, 64, has stood out as a vehement opponent of violence and privately voiced doubts about the talks his party leader, John Hume, held with Sinn Fein. During a 35-year medical career in



Dr Joe Hendron of the SDLP, who won West Belfast with a 589 majority at the 1992 election. He says that a vote for Sinn Fein is a vote for the IRA



Gerry Adams facing a strong tactical vote

West Belfast he has come face-to-face with the painful reality of republican terrorism.

In a powerful attack on Sinn Fein, Dr Hendron said that the electorate would be giving succour to the IRA if they voted for Sinn Fein. As he prepared for the launch of his campaign this week, he said: "People who vote for Sinn Fein will vote for the

whims of the IRA. People who vote for Sinn Fein will vote for a fascist, militaristic, sectarian organisation. God help the people of West Belfast if Sinn Fein win."

Dr Hendron derided Mr Adams for the nine years when, although elected for the constituency, he refused to take his seat as an MP in the "foreign" Parliament. He said: "In his time as MP Mr

Adams did not bring a single job to West Belfast. But I have played an important role in the creation of 3,000 jobs in the constituency during my five years as an MP."

Sinn Fein, which is campaigning under the slogan of "a new opportunity for peace", is trying to bolster its vote by hinting that a strong vote for the party could lead to a renewed IRA ceasefire. At

the launch of his campaign at a community hall off the Falls Road, Mr Adams described the election as a "defining" moment for Ireland. He added: "The incoming British Government will be a new one and all parties will have received fresh mandates. This could spur everyone on by creating a new sense of purpose in the search for peace."

Mr Adams assured sup-

porters that he would still not take his seat at Westminster. He said: "We stand on an abstentionist ticket, but it is a policy of active abstentionism. We will go to Westminster to advance the general interests of our constituents. But we will not take an oath of allegiance to an English Queen and we will not take up our seats in that Parliament."



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Mother and son search for road to Westminster

POLITICAL FAMILIES

ELIZABETH PEACOCK found few votes in Parliament Street yesterday (Damian Whitworth writes). The indomitable Mrs Peacock, Batley and Spen's Tory MP for 14 years, had popped across to the neighbouring west Yorkshire seat of Wakefield, where her son Jonathan is the Tory candidate. But they found that the road led them only to the gates of Wakefield prison.

This did little to dampen the spirits of Mrs Peacock, 59, who is one of the greatest escapologists of recent election history. When Conserva-

tives spoke out noisily against government policy on coal mining. This was perhaps crucial in saving her in 1992.

The Labour candidate, Mike Wood, 51, a social worker and former local councillor, argues that Mrs Peacock is neither as independent nor as loyal to the miners as she claims, having voted for the Government's electricity privatisation programme. "She is not prepared to accept the logic of her actions," he said. "We intend to put her on the spot about this."

It is likely that Mrs Peacock will have to come out with all guns blazing, especially as the loss of the traditionally Tory town of Heckmondwike, formerly part of her constituency, means that her estimated majority, based on 1992 voting, is just 845.

But Danny Lockwood, editor in chief of the Dewsbury Reporter Group of newspapers, which includes *The Batley News*, says that it is unwise to underestimate the importance of strong local voices in Yorkshire politics. Here, there is rivalry even between towns. Batley and Dewsbury, just a few miles apart, refused to merge their Rugby League clubs. "You talk about the antipathy of northerners to southerners. That is nothing to what Dewsbury men think of Batley men."

Leading article... Page 21

tives with far greater majorities than hers were swept away at the last election, she increased her vote by 40.

If her 32-year-old son, a barrister, is successful in securing a seat, he should have inherited a good idea about how to hold on to it. Mrs Peacock is quite certain why she is still there. "I'm a very independent Yorkshire woman. One minister said when he came to speak here that I was bloody minded. I was a bit surprised by that, but maybe it's true," she said.

She voted against charges for dental and eye checks and



Jonathan and Elizabeth Peacock finding their way around the campaign trail in Wakefield yesterday

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Records show Clinton fundraising obsession

FROM BRONWEN MADDOX IN WASHINGTON

HUNDREDS of pages of confidential White House documents reveal that President Clinton was so obsessed with the need to raise cash to campaign for his re-election that he buried himself in the trivia of Democratic Party fundraising.

The six-inch stack of records compiled by Harold Ickes, Mr Clinton's former Deputy Chief of Staff, counters the President's claim that he kept a clear distinction between money-raising for his own campaign and for the party. The documents, demanded by a congressional committee investigating allegations of unethical fundraising techniques, convey an atmosphere of desperation as the Democrats struggled to pull themselves out of the political abyss they had reached in 1994.

In themselves, the documents do not point to illegality. But they are unusually detailed. Mr Ickes appears to have been a compulsive note-taker, despite the possibility that records would be subpoenaed at a future date, a risk

that deters most prominent American officials from keeping a diary or notes.

Taken together with other records which have emerged, Mr Ickes's notes may prove acutely troublesome for the President and Vice-President Al Gore.

Mr Clinton is fighting hard to establish that he did not misuse the office of the President to help the Democratic Party campaign, and the



Ickes: squeezed out at the White House

Democratic National Committee (DNC) is trying to demonstrate that it did not knowingly receive illegal contributions from foreigners.

The documents released on Wednesday — the second set of records surrendered to congressional investigators by Mr Ickes — may also further damage the Democratic Party's ability to raise money. Still in debt from last year's presidential campaign, the party is struggling to raise money to fund next year's congressional elections and to repay earlier contributions whose source is now in question.

According to the new documents, Mr Ickes warned Mr Clinton and Mr Gore in February last year that "the fundraising needs for the DNC will require a very substantial commitment of time from the President, the Vice-President, the First Lady and Mrs Gore". In the memo, Mr Ickes underlined "very substantial".

In November 1995, a year before the election, campaign contributions were falling so

far short of expectations that Mr Ickes recommended to President Clinton that he, together with Mr Gore and Hillary Clinton, try to solicit money through personal telephone calls to potential donors. Mr Ickes reckoned that the only way to raise \$12 million in a hurry would be for the President to make 20 calls, the Vice-President 15 and Mrs Clinton ten. Of the three, only Mr Gore has acknowledged making fundraising calls at that point in the campaign.

Mr Ickes, one of the White House staff in Mr Clinton's first term who regarded himself as the President's liberal conscience, was gradually squeezed out as the President's policies moved towards the centre. He lost the battle for the top job of Chief of Staff to the much more conservative Erskine Bowles.

Mr Ickes has not talked in detail of his time in the White House, beyond handing over records to Congress. They have been heavily censored, with passages held back on the advice of his lawyers.



Bill Clinton, framed by his crutches, at a Democratic National Committee meeting

Mitterrand tapped telephones

Paris: Secret files from François Mitterrand's anti-terrorist unit discovered in a rented garage show the late French President ordered widespread illegal telephone tapping during his 14 years in power (Susan Bell writes). Often he was trying to protect his privacy, and especially the existence of his illegitimate daughter, Mazarine.

The archives contain recordings of tapped telephone conversations, demands for presidential favours and memos on terrorism suspects.

New anthrax has no cure

London: The Russian Federation has produced a genetically engineered variant of the anthrax bacillus which is resistant to all known antibiotics. *Jane's* publications said. News of the variant, developed in military research laboratories, was leaked by defectors. Anthrax, an infectious disease that normally affects animals, can be used as a biological weapon. (AP)

Godzilla's creator dies

Tokyo: Godzilla, the film monster, will live on despite the death in Tokyo of Tomoyuki Tanaka, 86, his creator (Robert Whyman writes). Tanaka produced the 1954 film which created the star of 22 movies. Roland Emmerich, the Hollywood director of *Independence Day*, has revived the monster for a new film to be released next year.

Mobutu men excluded

Kinshasa: Etienne Tshisekedi, Zaire's new Prime Minister, unveiled a cabinet with no associates of President Mobutu and with six ministries reserved for Laurent Kabila's rebels who control a quarter of the country. But a rebel official said they would not join Mr Tshisekedi's government. (Reuters)

Anger over US bases

Tokyo: A wave of anger swept Okinawa island as Japan's Government prepared to push through legislation to forcibly extend land leases for 12 American military bases (Robert Whyman writes). About 3,000 people are refusing to renew contracts to lease their land, part of that occupied by 40,000 Americans.

Court stops crucifixion

Sanaa: Yemen's supreme court approved the death sentence, by firing squad, on Mohammad Ahmad Mislleh, 48, who shot and killed four schoolchildren and two of their teachers on Sunday, but overturned a lower court ruling that his body should be nailed to a cross. (Reuters)

Reprieve for fowl murder

Bangkok: Wichai Thongto, 30, of Ratchaburi province, was killed by a peacock, his pet for eight years. The Thai was feeding four caged birds when the sole male clawed his head, causing a blood clot. His family would have carried the peacock out of revenge, but were too fond of it. (AP)

IMF looks into secret Israeli fund for Arafat

FROM ROSS DUNN IN JERUSALEM

ISRAEL'S transfer of almost \$100 million in tax revenue to a secret bank account under the control of Yasser Arafat, the President of the Palestinian Authority, is being investigated by the International Monetary Fund.

Money has been deposited in the account since 1994 to reimburse the authority for export taxes levied on fuel intended for Palestinian consumers. But an internal IMF document says the account, with a Tel Aviv bank, is "not under the supervision or control of the Palestinian Finance Ministry".

According to Western diplo-

mat, only two people can operate the account. Mr Arafat and Muhammad Rashid, his senior economic adviser. Other taxes that Israel has agreed to transfer to the authority were sent to banks outside Israel.

Haaretz, the Israeli daily, says at least part of the money deposited in the secret account was intended to elude the supervision of donor nations such as the United States. The newspaper said some of the funds were used to pay for the "bloated Palestinian security apparatus and the salaries of tens of thousands of superfluous clerks — purposes not

authorised by the donor nations". A senior Israeli official said some of the funds were intended for two different purposes. One was to get Mr Arafat, his family and a few senior officials away in the event of a coup. The other was a group of actions that the Arafat administration felt committed to finance in order to keep political power bases. This was also expenditure that donor nations would never approve, the official said.

But Dr Maher al-Kurd, the Palestinian Deputy Economics and Trade Minister, defended such practices. "The Palestinian Authority has the power to create economic reserves for itself in case of an emergency — something like a civil war. It's a shame the donor nations and the state of Israel do not understand this."

The issue is to be raised before Israel's parliamentary finance committee next week. Silvan Shalom, the co-ordinator for the committee, said: "Previous governments transferred the funds to Arafat so that he would be so kind as to carry on with the Oslo [peace] process."

Avraham Shochat, a former Israeli Finance Minister, said the funds were transferred under arrangements made in the so-called Paris accords, which govern economic cooperation between Israel and the Palestinians.



Yasser Arafat at a Palestinian police exercise yesterday

Netanyahu determined to defy Americans at summit

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM

THE Middle East crisis entered its third week unabated yesterday as clashes again rocked the occupied West Bank and Binyamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister, vowed not to compromise on settlement building during a crucial summit with President Clinton next Monday.

Jewish settlers mobilised to stiffen Mr Netanyahu's resolve in the face of Israeli reports that Mr Clinton would press for a temporary freeze on settlement construction, at least in annexed east Jerusalem, as part of a package deal to rescue the peace process from the brink of collapse.

"The Prime Minister will make clear in Washington that Israel stands by its right to build in Jerusalem and in settlements, and that building will continue at Har Homa," said Shai Bazak, Mr Netanyahu's spokesman, referring to the project for 6,500 new Jewish homes in east Jerusalem which led to the latest spiral of violence.

The Arabs rejected the Israeli stance, increasing the formidable difficulties facing Mr Clinton in finding any quick diplomatic fix to halt the violence that has left nearly 600 Palestinians wounded and nine people dead, including

three Jewish victims of a Tel Aviv suicide bomb.

In an attempt to avert more suicide bombs, Israel announced yesterday it had suspended its request to extradite a leader of Hamas, the Islamic Resistance Movement, from the US. "The Israeli Government has informed the US that at this stage, it wishes to suspend its request to extradite Hamas leader Moussa Abu Marzook to Israel," a statement from Mr Netanyahu's office said. "The decision was made on the basis of considerations relating to security and the prevention of terrorism."

Taleban outlaws women and white socks

BY CHRISTOPHER THOMAS SOUTH ASIA CORRESPONDENT

SCHOOLS have reopened in Afghanistan after the winter break without a single female student or teacher. This latest affront to girls and women follows the introduction of a rule banning the wearing of white socks because they might be attractive to men.

Kite-flying, once popular in much of the country, has also been banned because the excitement might disturb men obeying the Taleban edict to pray five times a day. House windows have been painted black to stop women being seen from outside.

Paper bags have been outlawed because of the remote chance that discarded pages of the Koran could end up in recycling bins and be turned into a bag. Soccer has been banned because it is said to be un-Islamic — possibly because men show their legs, although the reason has never been announced. The strict

regime is enforced by members of the Religious Police Force, who patrol the streets checking on women and reminding people of the latest regulations over loudspeakers. Photography and video players have been banned as un-Islamic, and women are no longer allowed to use the public baths — the only means to have a bath for many women because of cramped living conditions.

No other Islamic country imposes such harsh regulations. Iran allows women to vote, work and hold seats in parliament. In Afghanistan, women and girls are essentially banned from doing anything except working in the home and shopping.

They are whipped or jailed for violating the rules, which are invented by senior mullahs before being broadcast over Radio Shariat. It is essential for people to listen regularly to the radio to keep up with the constant flow of orders. Most mullahs in Afghanistan are illiterate graduates of *madrasahs* (Islamic

schools), which teach them to recite the Koran by heart.

The United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef) described the exclusion of women and girls from schools as an affront to human rights. Afghanistan was a "nation of widows". The 30,000 widows in Kabul were banned from working, except for a few who were allowed employment in designated hospitals. Kabul University, which used to have 4,000 female students, reopened late last month without female teachers or students. Taleban requires women to wear a voluminous veil. Even their eyes are covered by a cloth mesh.

Meanwhile, fighting is intensifying on two main battlefronts — one north of Kabul and the other in the west as Taleban seeks to bring the entire country under its control. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees said more than 250,000 people had been displaced since October. Many had fled to neighbouring Pakistan.

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Albanian leader's family home gives wary welcome where eagles dare

IT MAY be some time before "At home with the Berishas" graces the pages of *Hello!* magazine. If Albania seems cut off from the Western world, then its far northeastern corner, birthplace of President Berisha and seat of his clanish family, is at a further remove.

The high mountains all around, and harsh winters leave Tropoje largely isolated for four months of the year, and the flooding of the Black Drin valley — the maniacal hydroelectric legacy of Enver Hoxha, the late Communist dictator — means the only safe route of approach is by boat. Unless the President takes his helicopter, the 300-mile round trip from Tirana takes three days.

"This place only for eagles," said Peter, our taxi driver. Like most



President Berisha's background may have given him a better start than most to face the hazards of leadership. Tom Walker reports from Tropoje

southern Albanians, he views the north with considerable suspicion — a faraway realm of mountain savages, from which few return. The winding track through the highland copper belt of Kushnien in north-central Albania brought him only punctures and bad memories. As the jagged edges of spent Kalashnikov cartridges ripped open his tyres, Peter looked down at the mines where he had toiled for many of his 22 years as a political

prisoner. "We go back — now," he kept imploring. But we had missed the ferry, and spent nine hours on perilous hairpin bends overlooking sheer drops. Darkness had fallen and returning along a track that is notorious for banditry seemed inadvisable.

Our fortunes improved as Peter's badly bruised Mercedes limped into Bajram Curri, the only town of any description in the northeast. The local hotelier advised that

staying with a local family might be preferable to his arctic rooms — the hotel occasionally doubles as a mortuary — and we were taken to the home of Din Selimi, the town's surgeon.

In the morning, after checking up on an 18-year-old whose lungs, liver, kidneys and pancreas had been punctured by four bullets, Dr Selimi procured the hospital vehicle for us. An amalgam of French, Italian and Russian engineering known as a "Woz", it was the only means of transport — except donkey or on foot — to the President's home.

The Berisha farmstead shelters beneath the 7,000ft Mount Shkellen. Just five miles east is the Morina pass into Kosovo, the Albanian-dominated region of Ser-

bia where President Milosevic's tanks line the border. This is an area of suspicion and hostilities, where the ground floors of most houses have no windows — a precaution against the lingering blood feuds and vendettas.

Leading us into the courtyard, Dr Selimi pointed out eye-like slots in the upper floors of the massive stone house. "So you can shoot at Serbs," he explained.

A wizened elder in a white cap appeared, and we were led up an external wooden staircase to the guest room. "They come here with good intentions," said Dr Selimi. The old man did not look convinced, but bade us sit down. He squatted opposite the fireplace, as more Berishas entered, including two border guards who laid their

Kalashnikovs by the door. The local raki liquor was ordered.

Zequir Islam Berisha said he was the best man of Mr Berisha's father, and had performed the ritual first cut of the infant's hair in 1944. "He was a very clever boy, quiet and fond of books," he said, recalling the President's habit of learning "between 50 and 100 new words each day" in French and Russian.

As Arben Berisha, son of the President's cousin, refilled the raki glasses, the President's praises were toasted from all sides: a great doctor, a noble and honest family, the right man to lead the nation. The Berishas present said their family numbered around 120, divided between Tropoje, Bajram Curri and Tirana. "The President

has not done any favours to his family. We live in the same conditions as other Albanians," said Arben's mother, Elmaz Berisha, briefly entering the room to expel some invading chickens. She said her husband and his brother had left for the capital "to defend the family and the President". In the corner, a box was fixed six feet up a wall, where guests could place their weapons.

Zequir Islam Berisha and the guards glanced uneasily at our translator, a high-heeled southern girl making her first and probably last journey to Tropoje. "The tradition is that women should not take part in meetings, but things are changing," reflected the old man, nodding sadly. "Now that we're in Europe."

Kohl announces he will seek fifth term as Chancellor

FROM DEBORAH COLLETT IN BONN

HELMUT KOHL, the German Chancellor, has announced that he intends to stand for re-election next year after months of speculation that he was suffering from failing health and losing control over the spiralling economic problems that have dogged him for the past year.

During an interview to mark his sixty-seventh birthday yesterday, he made the announcement when asked if he wanted to run again. "A very clear yes," he replied. "I will stand again if my party and political friends want that."

There is no doubt that his Christian Democratic Union (CDU), and its Bavarian sister party, the Christian Social Union (CSU), will nominate him for the election, to be held at the end of 1998. Days earlier, party colleagues and friends, including Theo Waigel, the Finance Minister and CSU leader, publicly repeated their support. Political allies have been urging Herr Kohl to declare his candidacy early to put pressure on the opposition Social Democrats (SPD).

"There has never been any doubt that Herr Kohl is the chosen candidate of the CDU/CSU coalition," said a government spokesman in

Bonn last night. "What we hadn't heard from the Chancellor was a definite indication that he would stand."

The statesman looked relaxed and cheery during the interview with the state ARD television station, filmed at a spa hotel in Bad Hofgastein, near Salzburg, where he and his wife, Hannelore, have spent their Easter holidays.

He beamed proudly as he declared his plan to run in an election that, should he win, would make him the longest-serving government leader in Europe since the Second World War. After 14 years in power, he is already Germa-



Kohl: "the voters know him like an old uncle"

French poll 'early'

FROM SUSAN BELL IN PARIS

THE French legislative elections, scheduled for next year, could be brought forward to as early as this June, according to rumours in the French press yesterday.

Many politicians among the centre-right ruling coalition are pressing for an early election in which they are confident of winning a comfortable majority. The proposal, which has been pushed privately by Jean-François Mancel, General Secretary of President Chirac's Gaullist RPR party, also has considerable support among followers of Edouard Balladur, the former Prime Minister. The rul-

ing RPR and UDF parties have almost completed the selection of their 355 candidates, with just 30 exceptions, a feat they accomplished in record time.

While Alain Juppé, the Prime Minister, is not against the idea of moving the election forward, the Elysée Palace is said to be lukewarm about it. M Chirac has publicly rejected any idea of dissolving parliament for "the sake of convenience". A source close to the President told the daily *Liberation*: "The French like to be consulted regularly, but do not like to have their familiar routines changed."

ny's longest-serving postwar Chancellor, reuniting the country in 1990 and defeating four SPD challengers at the polls. It is clear he is intent on adding the launch of the euro single currency to his achievements before retiring.

"He who campaigns against the euro in the general election campaign — and I've heard such noises from the Social Democrats — campaigns against the unity of Europe and will lose this election dramatically," Herr Kohl said recently.

A tough boss, he prefers the "hands-off" style of leadership, leaving day-to-day politics to ministers and advisers, seeing himself rather as a statesman along the lines of the President in the United States or France.

He rarely makes statements in response to unemployment figures — creeping towards five million — to marauding miners marching on Bonn, or Bundesbank experts doubting Germany's ability to cut its deficit to fulfil the Maastricht treaty criteria.

It is this "distanced" method of governing that has brought success with voters. "Kohl doesn't stand alone — he is the 'Kohl system'," said Uwe Bahusen, political correspondent for *Die Welt* newspaper. "The Kohl system reaches far into the media, the economic and financial institutions of this land and into German life itself."

"Unemployment is too high ... but it is not a problem that affects the everyday lives of most Germans," he said. "For them there is only Kohl. The SPD is too aggressive, too provocative, too risky — they want what they know and they know Kohl, like an old uncle."

In a poll in yesterday's *Stern* magazine to find the person Germans most want as Chancellor, Herr Kohl beat all potential SPD candidates except Gerhard Schröder, the Premier of Lower Saxony and Euro-sceptic — who was ahead by 12 percentage points.

Leading article, page 21



Maria Pashinka, a faith healer, wields her crucifix like a sabre. She prescribed holy water to lift a supposed witch's curse on two men

Black magic puts spell on rural Russia

TATYANA Kuleshova has only a hazy memory of the cold night in February when two men from a nearby village burst into her tiny home in Valyuki and tried to wipe out her family in a frenzied attack provoked by the ancient superstitions that still control life in rural Russia.

"All I can remember is that they broke in about midnight. There was shouting. Someone struck me again and again with a hammer. They were attacking my brothers and sisters, even the little ones. My mother was killed. It was madness," said the frail-looking Miss Kuleshova, 22. Two months after the attack, which left her with serious head and leg injuries, she is still traumatised by the assault.

Although the police arrested the two men, her former boyfriend and his cousin, the motive for the savage attack has split this farming community in the heartland of Russia's fertile "black earth"



Pagan superstitions and medieval notions of justice still hold sway among many Russian peasants, Richard Beeston reports from the remote village of Valyuki

region 500 miles south of Moscow where many on the former Lenin collective farm are swayed by age-old pagan suspicions and believed that the family is too frightened ever to return home. Miss Kuleshova may look like any other peasant, but her attackers are convinced she is a witch.

"My husband was a good, hard-working and honest man until Tanka (Tanyana) put a spell on him and ruined his life," said Larisa Lebyodkina, the wife of Aleksandr

Lebyodkin, one of the two accused. "She drove him to this ... There should be a law against witchcraft."

Mrs Lebyodkina's evidence sounds like some hideous description from an account of medieval justice. Miss Kuleshova had for some time aroused the suspicions of the villagers. She was a loner and unmarried. She had a lazy eye. She frequently went to the woods by herself, and it was rumoured that she had a book on black magic at home.

Early this year Mr

Lebyodkin and his younger cousin Sergei Gretsov, who both worked as woodcutters, started complaining of seeing strange creatures in the forest, with the head of a black dog and the torso of a young woman. Mr Gretsov claimed the beast's body was that of Miss Kuleshova.

The men sought the advice of "Babka" Maria, the most powerful spiritual faith healer in the region. The former nurse's specialty is fending off the devil with religious incantations and the crucifix she wields like a sabre.

When the two men came to her, she diagnosed that a powerful curse had been placed on them and prescribed a treatment of holy water. Although they showed improvement, they nevertheless decided one night to wipe out "that family of wizards".

Gennadi Chekalidin, the detective investigating the attack, said that the incident was the first of its kind since the

revolution. "The accused men are undergoing psychiatric tests, but I can tell you that they are completely sane," he said. "They just believe in all this hocus-pocus, like everybody in the villages."

The Russian Orthodox Church is particularly worried about the development. During the years of Soviet rule, spiritual life was dominated by faith-healers and mystics. Now that the country is undergoing a period of economic and social upheaval, the Church is finding it difficult to reassert its role as the guardian of Russia's spiritual life. "We had a long period of total absence of spiritual education," said Father Aleksandr Bulekov, a priest at the Moscow Patriarchate. "People have lost the understanding of what is good and bad, and that is why we see so many deviations in moral, private and sexual life. We are seeing a weakening of Christian values."

Mafia chief held over boy's killing

PALERMO Italian police yesterday arrested a Mafia boss suspected in the kidnapping of the son of a Mafia turncoat and the killing of the boy whose body was dumped in a vat of acid. Police said, Salvatore Gallina, 54, head of the Mafia clan in Carini, was arrested near Palermo, after several witnesses accused him of holding the 11-year-old, Giuseppe Di Matteo, for a year and a half in an attempt to convince the boy's father not to co-operate with the judicial authorities. Gallina, on the run for several months, was found in a hideout near the cemetery in Carini.

The head of the Cosa Nostra, Giovanni Brusca, had ordered the kidnapping in November 1994 after learning that Santo Di Matteo had become a state witness. Brusca ordered the boy's killing after learning that he had been sentenced in absentia to life in prison for killing Ignazio Salvo, the Sicilian businessman, because of the testimony of Santo Di Matteo.

Brusca was arrested in May 1996 and indicated at the time that he was also willing to co-operate with the authorities. But he has yet to be granted witness protection. Five other suspects were arrested earlier this year for the kidnapping and death of the boy. (AFP)

Swiss link jailed Salinas to drugs

FROM DAVID ADAMS IN MIAMI

SWISS prosecutors investigating the frozen funds of Raúl Salinas de Gortari, the jailed brother of Mexico's former president, say they have linked him to the smuggling of "40 to 50 tons" of cocaine to the United States.

According to a letter leaked to the *Miami Herald* newspaper, the Swiss believe that Salinas, the brother of Carlos Salinas — Mexican President from 1988 to 1994 — "received enormous amounts of money for his help in connection to drug trafficking".

The letter, from Carla del Ponte, the Swiss Attorney-General, to her Mexican counterpart, is the first official indication of a drug connection to Mexico's former first

family. If proven, the allegations would be highly embarrassing to Citibank, which handled the Salinas accounts, and would also confirm widespread suspicions of high-level drug corruption in Mexico.

They would also provide ammunition to those in the US Congress who are pressing the Clinton Administration to punish Mexico for its slackness in the drug war. President Clinton is due to make his first official visit to Mexico next month.

Rumours about Raúl Salinas's unexplained wealth have circulated since late 1995 when officials froze more than \$100 million in his accounts in banks in Switzerland, Germany, France and America.



Carlos Salinas: letter implicates brother

Victory salute for war widows

FROM JONATHAN MIRSKEY IN HONG KONG

THE tiny band of surviving Hong Kong war widows recently granted British passports were honoured yesterday by a special firing of the colony's noon-day gun.

Pulling the lanyard on the Hotchkiss three-pounder, built in Britain in 1900 and made famous by Noel Coward's song *Mad Dogs and Englishmen*, was Jack Edwards, a veteran of the British defence of Hong Kong, who for years has been the widows' champion.

Mr Edwards, 78, was invited to take part in this daily event by Jardines, Hong Kong's most venerable trading house, which sponsors the gun-firings at the harbour's edge from what is still called

Lot No 1, the first plot of Hong Kong land sold at auction, in 1841.

Mr Edwards had almost single-handedly forced the Home Office into the "U-turn" on the widows' and wives' passports. "They should have given them in 1981," Mr Edwards said. "There were 56 ladies then. Now there are 29, 19 of them widows. It's shameful. These women's husbands gave their lives for Britain. That's their right of abode — they lie dead in the British war cemeteries here."

But Mr Edwards had enjoyed the day. "It's the first time I've ever fired a gun for pleasure. In anger, plenty of times during the war." Ac-

companying him were two Chinese veterans of the war, Albert Chen, of the Hong Kong Chinese Regiment, and Wang Hon-Lee, of the Hong Kong Volunteers. Both displayed their medals, including Burma Stars and Bars, and both wore Chindit ties from the Burma campaign.

Mr Chen, like all such servicemen, holds a British passport. His wife Loretta received hers last November. "I think we'll stay here," she said. "But now it will be much easier to travel."

Mr Edwards was looking forward to his next struggle. "Next it's the Japanese. They've got to make a full official apology ... for what they did in China in 1936."

Moscow 'allows torture'

BY MICHAEL BINYON
DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

SYSTEMATIC and barbaric torture is still widespread in Russia with prison inmates abused, assaulted and even asphyxiated, according to Amnesty International.

In a report released yesterday, the human rights organisation accused Moscow, which has signed the Convention against Torture, of passing legislation that contravened human rights standards and made violation easier. It said members of ethnic minorities were routinely beaten up by police, prisoners were used to ill-treat other prisoners, and doctors also were known to have co-operated in torture.

Detention often "amounted to torture". According to reports, prisoners died from overcrowding, lack of oxygen and poor conditions.

Amnesty said that on July 11 prisoners died of heat stroke in an overcrowded prison in Novokuznetsk. Up to 25 people were held in cells meant for ten, and air temperatures rose to 51°C (123.8°F). An attempted mass suicide had taken place at the jail in the previous year after beatings. "It is clearly within the power of Russian authorities to take immediate measures to eliminate these illegal practices," Amnesty said, calling for them to be made offences.

Spanish town gives official blessing to incestuous couple

FROM GILES TREMLETT IN MADRID

A TOWN in northern Spain has decided to recognise love triangles and incestuous couples and give them the same rights as married couples.

The town of Cambre has opened a register where any "non-matrimonial unit" can place itself. Expected to put their names on the list are a brother and sister couple, Daniel and Rosa Maria Moya Peña, who live an openly incestuous relationship and have two children. "We are not interested in what people do behind closed doors, or what their sexual relationships might be," said

Augusto Rey, the Socialist deputy mayor. "If they live together, than that is enough."

The Moyas will be able to apply for help with school transport, textbooks and out-of-school study programmes for their children, Cristina, 11, and Ivan, 4, when they register. They say they have been accepted by the people of Cambre, a town of 15,000 in La Coruña province. The couple, who were brought up separately, say they met and fell in love 18 years ago without knowing they were brother and sister.

When Daniel, 38, who was raised by his father in La Coruña, and Rosa Maria, 42, who was sent to a

Madrid orphanage, discovered the truth, they found it impossible to part. "We led a double life fleeing from Madrid to Alicante and from there to La Coruña, pretending that our children were our niece and nephew," Señor Moya told *El País* newspaper. "The people here have been fantastic. They have never looked down on us and the children have never had any problems at school," he added. The Moyas' incestuous relationship had helped to inspire the all-encompassing new register, Señor Rey admitted.

Although Cambre's register, approved at Wednesday night's council meeting, has legal effect only in

town hall matters, the Socialist council hopes it will add to a national debate on common law marriage. A move by left-wing parties to include homosexual couples in a proposed new law was narrowly defeated in the national parliament by the centre-right Popular Party (PP) of José María Aznar, the Prime Minister, and its allies on March 18. The issue will be debated again next month.

Many Spanish towns and cities have already opened de facto registers for unmarried couples, and some have included homosexuals. But no town has gone as far as Cambre, whose Socialist council

denies it is encouraging either incest or complex love relationships involving more than two people.

Señor Rey said: "If three elderly gentlemen who have decided to pool their pensions and live in the same house together want to register, then they can." He hoped that, if a common-law marriage were made legal, those who had registered would be able to use their dated entry to prove the length of their relationship in court.

PP councillors abstained in Wednesday night's vote. Jorge Trias, the party's parliamentary spokesman on social affairs, called the decision "shocking".

Voting for the man in the street

Will Tony Blair's neighbours be supporting him in the general election? Julian Kossoff investigates



Take a stroll through the fashionable, urban village of Barnsbury, an enclave of idiosyncratic Victorian squares, terraces and villas in the London borough of Islington and you cannot help but notice the healthy sprinkling of Vote Labour posters, adorning many a sash window.

Turn into Richmond Crescent and the trickle of posters turns into a flood. While in the surrounding streets it averages roughly one in ten, in Richmond Crescent the rate jumps to 20 out of 36 houses.

No 1 Richmond Crescent has two posters in the front window. This is to be expected because it is — for the time being — the home of Tony and Cherie Blair, their children, Euan, 13, Nicholas, 11, and Kathryn, 8, plus a live-in nanny.

Brenda McCormack, a crescent resident for 20 years, lives opposite No 1 and her poster display reflects the Blair. She denies that the presence of the party leader and favourite for the next Prime Minister has stirred the crescent community into an ostentatious display of loyalty and support. "No, no. This is a street that has always had a lot of Labour supporters," she says.

Likewise, City solicitor Kate O'Rourke, 37, who has virtually blocked out the light to her living room with a record-breaking four posters is adamant that there has not been a "famous neighbour effect". "None whatsoever," she confirms. "I am actually a member of the Labour Party."

But there is more. Further down the street, a more expensive-looking property has a mere single poster in the window. This is the home of Margaret Hodge, the former leader of Islington Council, currently MP for Barking in east London. Likewise, Chris Smith, MP for Islington South & Finsbury (majority 10,652) for whom so many of the Richmond Crescent residents are kindly advertising, Smith, the Shadow Secretary of State for Health, could soon become the first ever gay politician to come out of the closet and get into the Cabinet.

When Blair was elected as leader of the Labour Party in 1994, Islington replaced Hampstead and Bloomsbury as a magnet for the leftish chattering classes and the media went into a frenzy of speculation over the emergence of the "Islington Person". But many of the people living in Richmond Crescent did not even know



The Blairs' home, right, is not in the most chichi part of Islington, but in a quiet, pleasant street that is a bit tatty round the edges and home to a clutch of residents who criss-cross the social classes

who he was. "We had a street party several years ago and the Blairs came and they were a very friendly couple. People were saying 'Is that Tony Blair?' and others were saying 'Who is Tony Blair?'" recalls Ms McCormack.

The Blairs moved into Richmond Crescent four years ago, arriving from nearby Stoke Newington where the "stripped pine brigade" reside if they cannot quite afford the "toppy" Islington prices. Thanks to the reputed £200,000 salary of Cherie Booth, QC, they were able to put the deposit down on a house that would now sell for £500,000. But Richmond Crescent is not the "elegant terrace" of hyped press reports, nor is it

the most chichi part of Islington. In terms of local status, it lags behind the prestigious Canonbury Square and the exquisite houses that line Grand Union Canal. Richmond Crescent is a quiet, pleasant street and an ideal place to bring up children, but it is also a bit tatty at the edges and home to a clutch of residents who criss-cross the social classes.

Indeed, the Blairs' view from their front window is of the peeling-paint facade of Angelo's Auto, owned by the eponymous gruff, middle-aged Greek, sporting a three-day growth. There are no political posters on the oil-stained walls of his small garage, where he bashes away at an old Astra, just a collection of pictures of

topless, pneumatic blondes. His friends call him "Mafia" and it would appear he has taken a vow of omertà. He has been in business on the street for 20 years.

Asked if he sees much of Mr Blair, he replies enigmatically: "I do my business and he does his." Has he ever worked on Mr Blair's car? "No, not yet," he says appearing somewhat put out that his famous neighbour has never called upon his services.

Indeed, Mr Blair's family car could do with a bit of restoring. "A knackered old thing," is how Jim Wortley, 31, a designer who lives in a basement flat, describes the car. "He's quite a nice bloke actually," says Mr Wortley. "I often see him on a Sunday morning when I'm working on my MG and he always says hello."

Mr Blair's image as happy family man is accurate, says Mr Wortley. "It was really nice last year when I was coming back with the Sunday papers and reading about these massive sleaze stories, involving the Conservatives, and then I would see Mr Blair (after church) with his children piling into the knackered old Montego estate to go and play football or take them swimming." Mr Wortley says he voted Labour last time and will "probably" repeat the choice.

A few minutes later, Mr Wortley takes delivery of a pizza. Alan, the delivery man from Kings Pizzas in the nearby down-at-heel Caledonian Road, says he has delivered pizzas to the Blair household before. "I gave it to one of the boys."

"The boys" are the most obvious Blair family presence on the street. Frequently, they can be seen rollerskating or playing football in the street with the other local children. At one end the street, a wall has been converted into a goal with a chalk outline for the posts and cross bar.

"My brother plays with the kids, they get on well and just generally knock about the street together," says Leveilyn John, a 20-year-old studying natural sciences at Girton College, Cambridge, who has not

decided whom to vote for. He is home for the Easter break, walking his dog.

He has met Mr Blair only once. "It was early and I was wandering around in my dressing-gown. Mr Blair knocked on the door. I didn't even know who he was. His car had skidded on the ice and hit my mother's Peugeot and he wanted to report it, although there was no damage at all. I would have just driven off," said Mr John.

from his front door to the Leader of the Opposition's limo.

The Blair children are universally popular. "They are just really nice kids," says Ms O'Rourke. Nor does she begrudge the Blairs' decision to abandon the local school system and send the boys to the grant-maintained London Oratory School in Fulham. "It is a matter of choice, isn't it?"

On the south side of the crescent, where the houses have been sub-divided into flats, many are still council-owned. "I am a Conservative at heart," says Stephen Flanagan, 57, who is one of the most colourful characters of Richmond Crescent. He lives alone on a disability grant in one of the council flats, dabbling with a paintbrush and creating what we agree to describe as "libidinous art". He says the Blairs are nice people, but is less sure about Margaret Hodge. "She's never had any time for me really," he says.

A fervent monarchist with a huge picture of a young Queen by his bedside, he is also a supporter of a united Ireland. However, he has drawn up his own political poster and put it in the window. It reads "Vote for the Coalition Party." "I'd really like all the four parties (including the Greens) to work together," he says.

At the far end of Richmond Crescent, outside a small block of purpose-built council flats, Negus Walters, 85, is standing in front of his rose bushes — "my little show". He is a Tory strategist's dream, a hard-working, working-class man and a lifelong Conservative voter.

He is unimpressed by Mr Blair's efforts to modernise the Labour Party. "What I don't like about Labour is the unions, they are still too strong."

No For Sale sign has gone up alongside the election posters. But as Tony Blair ponders the possibility of moving from No 1 to No 10, he must be concerned about its impact on his family life after what appears to have been four very happy years in Richmond Crescent.



Cherie Booth "swans in and out"

Mr Blair's stock is high in Richmond Crescent. A couple of residents mention "that grin" but give the impression that when delivered in person on a sunny Sunday morning it comes across as genuine. Cherie Booth is more aloof, they say. One female resident says: "You see her swanning in and out, looking powerful." Mr Blair, meanwhile, is rarely seen these days, apart from the quick dash

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THE ROYAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

Why I'm not backing Tony

Richmond Crescent is a veritable fortress for new Labour. Not surprising, really, with the lord of the manor, Tony Blair, living at No 1. As if to underline his majesty, police are patrolling the little street 24 hours a day and imposing tough parking restrictions.

The crescent is ideal new Labour territory — elegant, Victorian terraced housing, most of the occupants earn £30,000-£200,000, and, as pairs and families a plenty. To gild Tony Blair's escutcheon with some street credibility, there are even some working-class families here. The only thing missing from this almost quintessential new Labour manor is a Spice Girl or two.

But just a few doors down from Mr Blair, I and a few other residents have been plotting a jacquerie. Three lifelong Labour voters live in this house and one who will be going to the polls for the first time. The stirrings of revolt began a few weeks ago when one of us muttered that it was time to give the Monster Raving Loony Party a chance.

Before long a council of war was held. Three of us agreed to jettison the habits of a lifetime and not vote

Misha Glenny on the revolt just a few doors down the road

Labour. We are not staunch old Labour but the born-again market evangelism of Tony Blair and Gordon Brown sticks in our gullets. We cannot square certain principled beliefs about the health service and state education with the Shadow Chancellor's obsession about holding down the basic rate of tax. If we wanted a Tory government, we would vote Tory.

I admit to feeling guilty because I am convinced that Robin Cook has the requisite wit and cunning to make an excellent Foreign Secretary. But Mr Cook could not swing the council of war. Enough is enough. Our votes would go elsewhere.

The first-time voter, less curiously cynical than her elders, remains undecided. No fan of Tony Blair's, she nonetheless likes Chris Smith, our local MP. In an admirable display of civic responsibility, she intends to check out the other local candidates to see if they are deserving of her vote.

We three elders should be faithful retainers in the forward march of new Labour. Middle-class, property owners, highly educated, congenial opponents of the Tories, yet all of us find Mr Blair's style too patronising and his programme unconvincing.

Are we an aberrant group of stick-in-the-muds? It is possible that we represent a psephologically insignificant sub-group of the chattering classes. But we might be more substantial than that.

this week's news about the rise in house prices barely dents the losses I sustained.

Lib Dems? Well, we all applaud their commitment to increasing tax to meet the costs of the public sector. The female elder, however, finds it impossible to vote for a party which boasts the anti-abortion campaigner David Alton as a member. She believed her problem solved when Swampy announced his candidature on the Never Mind the Ballots Party. But his announcement was an April Fool's joke.

One elder is voting Lib Dem. Following the Swampy debacle, the female elder, the most militant among us, has toyed with the heresy of returning to the Labour fold. This may well be Tony Blair's secret weapon — inertia triumphs because of the lack of a credible alternative. I will not vote Labour or Tory. Lib Dems remain the front-runners. But for the first time in an election, I intend to scrutinise every programme on offer — from local issues to the people who dress up as bunnies and penguins. May the best furry animal win.

The author is a writer on foreign policy who occasionally votes in British elections

When I called R Graves can't I

SECTION 4 Pop on Friday Brothers rebuild

When you're called Rupert Graves, you can't lose

The newest star of the West End on his unlikely journey from small-time circus clown to the Old Vic

There is a lot of snobbery in acting," Rupert Graves says. "and being called Rupert doesn't hurt." For a while, after his film debut as Helena Bonham Carter's sweet younger brother Freddie in *A Room With A View*, the cachet bestowed by "Rupert" brought stiff invitations to Sloane parties in Fulham.

People assumed he must be a scion of the poet Robert Graves's family. "I believe my brother was with you at Ampleforth," they would say. Whereupon Graves would remind them that he was at Wyvern Comprehensive, Weston-super-Mare. The lad has done awfully well since he left there at the age of 15 with one grade C in sociology. (So much for the contemporary insistence that there is no future for anyone without a fistful of grade As.) At least the school took him on a theatre trip to Bath, where he saw Warren Mitchell in *Death of a Salesman*, and thought, an actor's life for me.

He is having a great success in Peter Hall's first Old Vic rep season, in *Hurlyburly*. David Rabe's 1984 Broadway hit, a Mame-like piece — fast, violent, funny, wisecracking. The opening night was theatrically historic. Eighteen minutes from the final curtain, Graves

Butlin's at Skegness, to a leading role at the King's Head Theatre in Islington seems a fantastic leap of luck. But the director Dan Crawford remembers that when 18-year-old Graves arrived to audition as Kenneth Grahame's unhappy son (who put his head on the railway track) in *The Killing of Mr Toad*, "he was leagues ahead of all the others".

Natural aptitude, and brown-eyed charm, took him swiftly into the West End, and the National, and into roles such as the highly strung poet Marchbanks in Shaw's *Caedra*. When Celestia Fox cast him as Freddie Honeychurch in *A Room With A View*, he says he blushed with terror throughout and they had to dub out the Somerset ("hote-w-l", for hotel) in his accent.

"I thought I was so bad. I said to James Ivory: 'I'm so sorry, I've messed the whole film up,' and he said: 'It's all right, your part's not big enough to mess the whole thing up.'"

In another E.M. Forster film, *Maurice*, he played Scudder the gamekeeper, who climbs into Maurice's bedroom and seduces him. He seemed to be habitually offered sexually ambiguous roles — because of being pretty? "I think there was a fashion for gay roles," he says, "and once I'd done *Maurice* and *Torch Song Trilogy* — well, people are very unimaginative, aren't they?"

At 33, he enjoys domestic contentment in a small rented flat in Stoke Newington with his girlfriend Yvonne, a mature student reading history. "When I'm in a play she turns into an orphan. I just crash out or say 'be quiet, I'm learning my lines'." He said he was a loafer by nature. "I loaf in the local park with my greyhound Roland, as in *Rat* [he was named by the RSPCA]. We loaf together."

A busy sort of loafer. Ever since 1982 he has popped up all over the place: in the mud as Lysander in Robert LePage's extraordinary *Midsummer Night's Dream*; as sexy Otto in Sean Mathias's *Design for Living*; as the loyal equerry Greville in *The Madness of King George*; as the transvestite David/Davina in the televised drama of the Stephen Waddell shootings; as the wretched son of Jeremy Irons in Louis Malle's *Damage*.

Last year alone, he was brilliantly cast against type as Huntington in *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, appeared with the RSC in *Les Enfants du Paradis*, and also made five films, three still awaiting release. I asked what they were about. He laughed. "Dangerous question. Actors always say: 'It's about me. I'm this butler...'"

In *Intimate Relations*, he is Harold Guppy, a violent, spineless lodger involved with his landlady, Julie Walters. In *Different For Girls*, he's a wastrel motorbike messenger who takes up with an old schoolfriend who has changed sex. In *Mrs Dalloway* he is the shell-shocked Warren Septimus Smith. "I'd never read any Virginia Woolf before, but the more I looked into her life the more I loved her. A dot on the wallpaper can open up whole worlds."

His diffidence about discussing roles in literary terms — "I shy away: I feel so uneducated" — makes the intelligence of his performances the more striking. In *Hurlyburly* he plays Eddie, a casting director "whose house in the Hollywood Hills has become a viper-pit of dysfunctional divorced men who bitch about women, play power games and behave very badly. Eddie watches his friendships disintegrate, which of course sends him batty. But the themes are so neatly woven, it's like trying to explain an embroidered shawl."

He now wants to write a

short film, the kind that wins awards and gets bought by French television and makes money. He keeps working for minimal wages, or "deferred payments" in films. He is so un-self-absorbed, he has not even read his notices. They are very good. "It is worth crawling over broken glass to get to this production," said Kaleidoscope.

● *Hurlyburly*, now extended to May, is on every Sunday and Monday at the Old Vic: 0171-923 7610.



Rupert Graves: brown-eyed gamin charm, with a hint of stubble on the chin he puts down to a mixture of "exhaustion and laziness"

THE SUNDAY TIMES

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THE VALERIE GROVE INTERVIEW



was in mid-speech when the stage manager rushed on stage and called the performance to a halt. The Old Vic was evacuated by a bomb scare. (Was this because the title *Hurlyburly* came from the Scottish play, Benedict Nightingale wondered.) The audience gathered, agog to know how it ended, on the grotty, wind-ridden Waterloo Road scrubland. So the cast bravely continued performing in the al fresco chill, sans props, shouting over the roar of passing buses. They deserved their standing ovation.

"It was bizarre, surreal," Graves says. He has been fighting flu ever since.

He is a gamin figure, his chin stubbled from "exhaustion and laziness". A pack of Camels reposes on the table. Graves had cut down to six a day until this play, but Eddie — a man fuelled by alcohol and cocaine — is a heavy smoking part. "A consuming part, in every sense." Never tried coke himself? "God, no!" he shouts.

As a boy he learnt comic music-hall monologues (from his musician father, who taught piano) and hung out with a punk crowd on the less genteel side of the seaside town. At school he was "useless, inattentive, resisting, tired. I just found growing up very tiring. I was a moony boy, day-dreaming, often ill."

The local jobcentre had no acting jobs to offer. The nearest thing was a YTS apprenticeship with a small, old-fashioned travelling circus which had come to town and lost its clown. "I became Weedy the Clown in a purple suit. I used to hate circus clowns as a kid — silly, painful, overgrown fools." He said he has tried to write about his circus experience but "there aren't many personal dynamics in a circus: everyone just huddled in their caravans every night".

To go from the circus, via

SECTION TWO

Pop on Friday: the Chemical Brothers rebuild rock — page 33

THE SUNDAY TIMES IS THE SUNDAY PAPERS

Why should we thank the Tories?

The economy still has structural flaws, says Tessa Blackstone

It would be very surprising if the British economy were not doing quite well at present. We are at the most favourable part of the economic cycle, the last recession several years ago, unemployment falling and with little sign of inflation picking up. The Tories are naturally anxious to take full credit. In effect, they say: "Look, it's a wonderful dawn, aren't we clever?" The electorate, however, is unimpressed. Experience has taught that night tends to follow day. And even if the crowing of the cock marks the dawn, no one thinks the bird is responsible.

The Government cannot complain if the voters do not give it credit. No one can recall Messrs Major, Clarke and Heseltine campaigning in 1992, in the midst of recession, on the slogan "It's all our fault". The recession was a global phenomenon, we were assured; everyone in the world was suffering. The British Government was not responsible. That our recession was much worse than that in most other countries was not acknowledged.

Even now, the efforts to take credit are hilariously selective. Inflation? The lowest in years; no mention of its being among the highest in Europe. Growth? Faster than almost anywhere else in Europe, we are told; no mention of its being unimpressive by historical standards.

There is justice in the public scepticism. Ken Clarke's "sound macroeconomic judgements" were forced on the Government, kicking and screaming, by the failure of its exchange-rate mechanism policy. Mr Major entered at the wrong rate, as Labour said at the time, ignored the effect of German reunification, and then spent billions of pounds in a vain attempt to avoid humiliating election.

Taxation policy has also been a shambles. It is normal for interest rates to go up and down, but the Tories' fiscal yoyo is a sure sign of incompetence. If cutting income tax rates immediately before this election was justified, how can it have been right to have been putting so many taxes up just 12 months before? The Government had a massive fiscal blow-out before the 1992 election — courtesy of Chancellors Major and Lamont — which eventually drove public borrowing to nearly £50 billion a year, just under 8 per cent of gross domestic product. Twenty-two tax increases followed the election. The last lot were barely on the books before Mr Clarke changed tack again in November 1996.

And there is no escape in looking at a longer perspective. The outstanding feature of 18 years of Tory macroeconomic policy has been instability. Our economy has been twice as unstable as Germany's over the past 20 years and one and a half times as unstable as those of the US, Japan and Italy. Britain has spent longer in recession than other developed nations. We have had two massive recessions, which destroyed about a quarter of our industrial capacity, and a reckless consumer boom in between based on exploding asset prices. The

last time the people were regaled with talk about an economic renaissance was in the Lawson boom. They ended up facing soaring unemployment and negative equity on their houses.

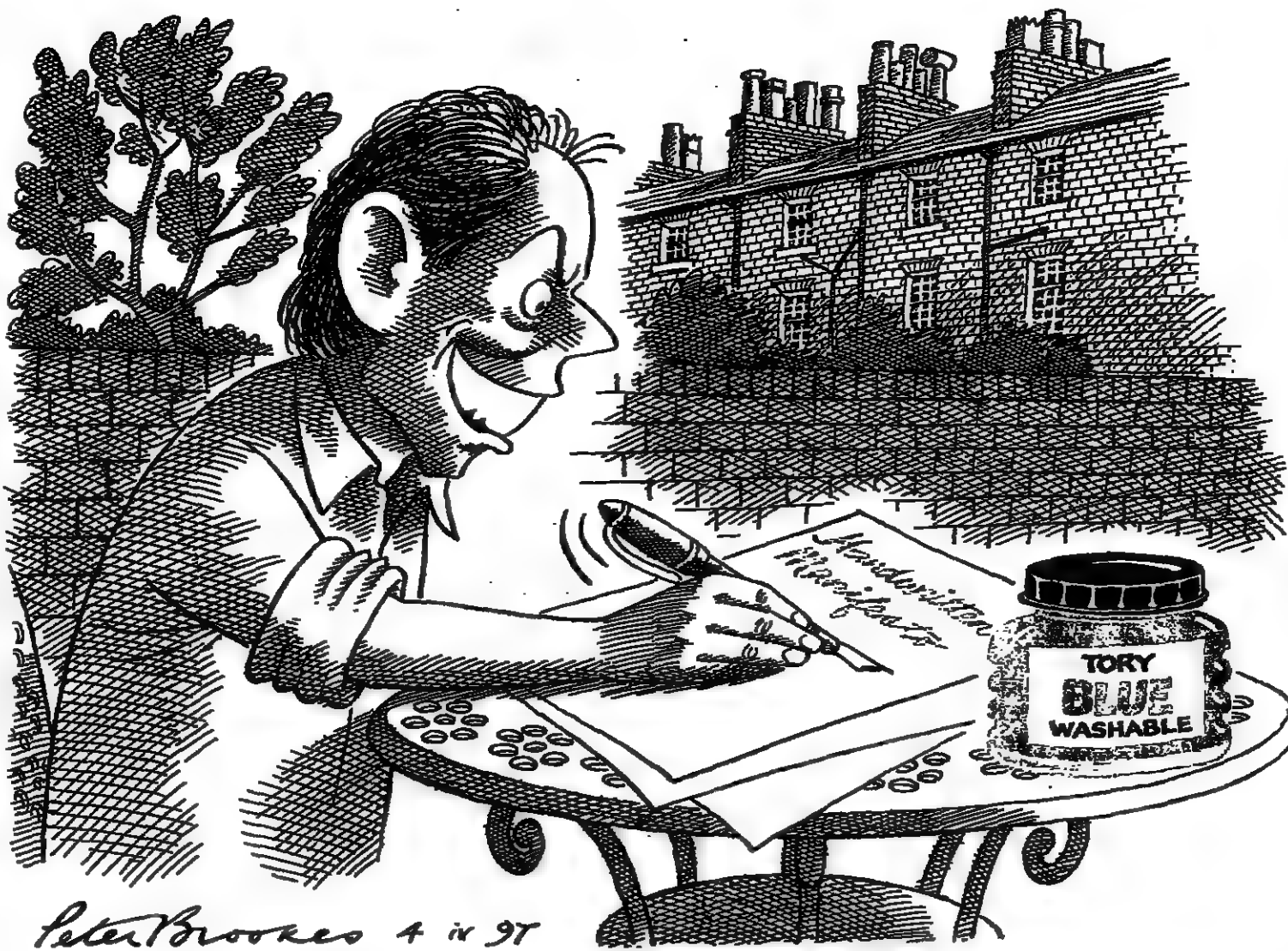
This time the recovery is more modest, partly because the public is cautious. They have learnt their lesson. They will save more, borrow less and not believe what they are told by ministers. Polls show that people's expectations are low. They know that beneath the massaged unemployment statistics the reality is of only slow growth in employment, still not back to pre-recession levels after five years of "recovery", and that half the new jobs are part-time, temporary and low-paid.

No one thinks this unimpressive recovery could be safely accelerated by more government spending or by easy money. Labour has acknowledged that with the Government still borrowing heavily there can be no overall increase in public expenditure. But the Tory reforms have totally failed to strengthen Britain's productive potential. Even now, the recovery is consumer-led, with overall investment hardly growing at all, and investment in manufacturing actually down by 9 per cent in 1996. The Government seems to care about investment only when it is foreign.

It is the persistent neglect of domestic investment that has undermined the country's productive base. No wonder that while the Tories crow about consumer-driven growth, the City and the Bank of England fret about inflation and higher interest rates. With more than 1.6 million unemployed, could there be more eloquent testimony to the enfeebled state of the supply side of the economy?

What it shows is that all the labour market "reforms", all the privatisations, all the cutbacks in public services and growth of inequality have achieved in aggregate nothing that can be measured, no increase at all in our sustainable growth. The real, deep structural weaknesses in the British economy have been missed and allowed to fester: our inadequate training, our relatively declining research and development, our elitist educational system that neglects half our people, our high real interest rates and our short-term management, which result in inadequate investment.

As the Commission on Public Policy and British Business summarised it, to the fury of Michael Heseltine, Britain has too many inefficient and poorly run companies; too many underachieving people; too little investment in research innovation and physical capital. That is the real indictment of Conservative economic policy. Tackling those structural weaknesses will be the task of the next Labour government. Labour's policies will be driven by the need to increase investment in industrial capacity, in people and in ideas. Baroness Blackstone is a Labour spokesman in the Lords.



Peter Brookes 4 is 97

No Labour sleaze — yet

There are lots of sticks with which to beat the Blairites, but who wants to know?

Soho is becoming more gay, in both senses. The area is less sleazy than in days when heterosexual clip-joints and dirty cinemas set the scene. Now Soho is dominated by coffee bars and bistros, and a more cheerful, stylish, above-board atmosphere prevails. Casually dressed young men, their hair slightly too clean and their clothes slightly too cool — men who take a little more trouble with their appearance than a man ought — queue for their cappuccinos or promenade in groups and pairs. So far from being furtive, this crowd is there to be seen.

A few hundred yards away, just off Trafalgar Square and not a mile from the Houses of Parliament, is a bar more representative of the half-submerged homosexual scene of the old London. It is in a basement. Its name is Brief Encounter. The atmosphere here — noisy and sweaty — is conducive to encounters of a rather casual, if close, kind. You would not call the entrance on a warm evening in early spring might sense the heat and bustle below the street, Brief Encounter has never been a place to pose. Once out onto the pavement, many of its customers aim to slip, unnoticed, into the night.

It was on such an evening not many weeks ago that I was walking with a friend along St Martin's Lane. Near the entrance to Brief Encounter we ran into someone who is known to me. He is quite a senior Labour MP, a married man. He was with a friend, a man whom we also both know. We exchanged greetings. The Labour MP, a good man who knows he can trust me, seemed distracted. "We've just had a rather unpleasant moment in Brief Encounter..." he began. His friend silenced him. The implication was clear. My friend and I moved to silence him too. We sensed without speaking that even among friends there are things best not disclosed unless there is a reason, because what we do not know we need not conceal. I had no wish to know.

And even if I did, nothing — no principled argument about gay rights, no desire to ingratiate myself with Conservative Central Office, no offer of money from a tabloid newspaper... no, not even a million pounds, not even an argument for self-preservation — would induce me to tell anyone the Labour MP's name. There are three reasons.

First, because I do not disapprove of his behaviour. It might have been

foolish, but the world is a strange place and, trapped by circumstance, people behave strangely. I am disinclined to judge. Second, because, even if one did disapprove, to tell others — and especially the sensationalist press — would be dishonourable. For readers of *The Times* that hardly requires elucidation.

Either of these arguments alone would seal my lips. Together they are unanswerable. But there is a third reason to reject any idea of trying to purvey this title-tattle. Few would want to buy it.

A tabloid editor might, I suppose, toy with the idea of running the story on an inside page, if only (given all the Tory stories) to create a half-hearted impression of balance; but a moment's thought suggests it would be an also-ran. The truth is that "Labour sleaze" is not the flavour of the hour. The press are hardly interested in this. Peregrine Worsthorne, writing this week in *London's Evening Standard*, says: "It is difficult to believe that there are not some Labour politicians around who could be exposed if the Tory newspapers were really trying. Are they trying, and if not, why not? In my view, they are not trying..."

And of course there is Labour sleaze. Journalists who follow these affairs, reading of my chance meeting in St Martin's Lane, will turn their minds immediately to half a dozen or so Labour MPs: the usual suspects. I must tell them that my friend was none of these. The Commons is full of surprises. As for the heterosexual side of things, where there is life there is adultery; and, despite appearances, there is life in new Labour.

There is financial sleaze there, too, though I suspect rather less than among Conservatives. It is in local government that Labour sleaze outshines the Tories, and there are some shocking local government stories in the air at present. Local government is always a turn-off for the national press, but in this atmosphere of heightened electoral tension nothing would be easier than to invite Tony Blair to show what he would call "leadership" by condemning or expelling alleged miscreants — and

then make an issue of his response.

Let me share a secret with you, the British press is unlikely to bother. Consciously in some cases, unconsciously in others, nobody is looking for a stick with which to beat the Labour Party, though plenty of sticks lie around us. Just imagine, for instance, that it was John Major who had first challenged Tony Blair noisily and repeatedly to a televised debate. Imagine then that, to everyone's surprise, Blair had accepted. Suppose then that, after a week's argy-bargy, Major had withdrawn, even though Blair was finally prepared to accept all the broadcasters' terms. Think how contemptuously the press would have presented Major's running away!

"Any place, any time!" I ask you! The Labour leader's wriggling, now that the challenge has been accepted, from the very debate he has been shouting for, is the sort of unseemly spectacle at which the dogs of the press and their cartoonist friends could bark and snap for days, all across their front pages, were they disposed to. They are not disposed to. I find the response of the British media to the Blair-Mandelson cop-out — a response which has ranged from an amused raised eyebrow on the inside pages to complete silence — quite breathtaking.

Some in the press do feel uncomfortable about this, but not many and not very. In much the way Tony Blair has begun to talk about the reforms of the 1980s as though "the Eighties", rather than a group of Conservative women and men, had enacted those reforms (so that to challenge them would be "going back on the past") — end of argument, so journalists prefer to see themselves as reporting the news, rather than making it. There is a weird tendency among newspapermen to describe the operation of their own judgment as though it were a phenomenon of nature, rather than the exercise of personal choice. Thus, a colleague may remark, "I don't think that Labour sleaze story has legs". This is media-speak for "the story will soon disappear from the newspapers". But why will it disappear? Only if we stop putting it there

will it disappear. Stories have no legs but the legs we give them.

"I doubt whether this is a story," one may hear. This means "I doubt if my editor wants to make it a story". It is as though the journalist wished to, consciously to mispry himself, and his own role, out of the picture, as though we lived in a world where "stories" were almost physical entities, born to live, thrive, languish and die as flesh-and-blood creatures do; and we were only the midwives and undertakers, watching, taking photographs and writing it down, as nature, relentless, pitiless and unswerving, takes her course.

Are we scared of ourselves, we in the media? Are we ashamed of our own power, embarrassed by our influence, nervous at the hands we hold to the very windpipe of those whom we suffer to live or die? Are we afraid that if our role were to be fully described and properly acknowledged, we might be brought to account? Do we lie awake at night, having perused our glorifications or vilifications of those elected politicians who claim the democratic right to govern, and wonder what democratic legitimacy attaches to our own part in that government? And if we govern too, what "standards in public life" might be applied to our own lives?

In the end, we take refuge in numbers. Millions, we muse, choose to buy our paper or switch on our programme. Nobody forces them to. Their choice reflects confidence in...

In what? How can they know what is going on, when they have only our word for it? How can they choose, when we, as a media pack, simply follow each other around, barking? Are we made in our readers' image, or are they reflecting ours? Or is it a hall of mirrors, reflections of reflections, echoes amplifying echoes, rising and dying according to laws we cannot know?

There will be no Labour sleaze in this election. The media have commanded it. The election will then return a Labour government. The media will then declare that the people have spoken, and the media have spoken for the people. After that, there will be Labour sleaze. The media will command it. Their vengeance will be terrible.

So I say to my brief encounter in St Martin's Lane, and to some of his friends: from May 2, watch out. What they will do to you will be as unfair as what, to your evident satisfaction, they are now doing to the Tories.

Fury of an inquisitor scorned

Nicholas

Wapshott on

Paxo's outburst

The stalwarts of the Garrick Club bar may rue the day they blackballed Jeremy Paxman when they read the interview with him in today's *New Statesman*. For in his withering remarks about John Major, Labour worthies and the way the BBC runs things, he has shown that he is undoubtedly one of the forthright, opinionated and indiscreet. It comes as no surprise, perhaps, to discover that Paxo is at heart a young curmudgeon, since he has built his reputation on bullying politicians on *Newsnight* and bawling stammering students on *University Challenge*.

But who would have thought he would be so rash as to blow off steam in print at this stage of the election? Kingsley Amis, in his *Lucky Jim* phase, might well have said, "One of the problems is that the English have this obsession with looking back. The rural idyll was out of date when Baldwin talked about it and ludicrous when Major did. Warm beer, old folk cycling to Communion, cricket on the village green — all that bollocks that the Tory conference did three years ago." But Amis would not have added, as Paxman did, "Don't use the word bollocks."

And you can hear the Amis of *The Old Devils* saying "Of course I get impatient, and sometimes I'm afraid I let it show. One shouldn't really. But it's very difficult to remain calm when you're listening to someone talk complete bollocks." Not to mention "Wonderful to see all these people getting their snouts in the trough, isn't it? I mean the new Labour aristocracy. Why are we supposed to believe that filling the Lords with a few hand-picked placemen and women is more democratic than having a bunch of hereditary peers?"

There is more. All those who have groaned at the Dimbleby brothers' monopoly of election-night television will nod at Paxman's complaint: "It is part of the constitution in this country that all major events have to be presented by a Dimbleby." And he needs little prompting to bite the hand that feeds him. Answering John Birt's criticism of him as "sneering", he replies to the BBC's Director-General: "Incredibly, scepticism maybe. But sneering I don't like."

But if Paxman's strength is his ability to ask the pointed questions, to treat politicians as hostile witnesses in the dock and, on being fobbed off, to give the incredulous slow burn to camera which Dame Edna reserves for guests who have inadvertently let out a double entendre, it is also his weakness. Politicians are usually so keen to get on television that they will risk all sorts of indignities, even a rough ride with Paxman. But with May looming they may just say no.

In the old days, when the term "spin-doctor" meant nothing more sinister than a Sadler's Wells physiotherapist, Wilson, Heath and Callaghan obeyed the taxi-rank rule and took who they were given. Margaret Thatcher changed all that, as she changed so many other things. She traded Robin Day for Jimmy Young and later, in her bunker years, she would grant audiences only to those she knew would temper their polite probing with some quiet fawning. David Frost and Alastair Burnet were both gentle with her; coincidentally both were knighted by her. Arise Sir Jeremy? I don't think so.

The only exception to this rule is the *Today* programme and its hosts James Naughtie and John Humphrys. Despite breakfast television, the Radio 4 flagship still sets the tone of the political day. And while both Humphrys and Naughtie have, like Brian Redhead before them, been accused, on air, of political bias, they are protected by the power of their audience. Take too many liberties with that nice Mr Naughtie, such a reassuring friend when introducing those lovely live opera relays, and half of Middle England will hit you over the head with their umbrellas.

But if this is a difficult time for politicians to be interviewed, it is also a difficult time to be an interviewer. Paxman has had his three bites at the cherry, interviewing each party leader in turn. Major tried to ingratiate; Blair blanched; and Ashdown very nearly leapt out of his chair and punched him on the nose for impertinently dismissing his party as a waste of time. But that is the election as good as over for Paxo. Thanks to good media management by the parties, he won't get a fourth bite.

Instead on election night, as he told Mary Riddell, the man who asks the questions the licence-fee payers would like to ask will be "sitting in a little pen at the side of the studio" watching Dimbleby major take the limelight. It is an odd use of resources. Would a major American network waste such a popular asset in this way? (And would a major American media star put up with it?) But wait. The good electors of Taiton are looking for an honest, upright, non-partisan champion to stand as the anti-sleaze candidate against Neil Hamilton. The stainless candidate must be fiercely articulate and fearlessly frank, the Gilbert Harding of our time. A thorough knowledge of the frailties of politicians and an ability to cut through the verbiage would be an asset. If only the *Newsnight* Strangler were available.

Uncertified

LIKE certain dotty old men, the Referendum Party behaves with deranged logic. When it decided to send out millions of copies of a promotional video, it did not count on thousands of them being sent back. Cue operational meltdown.

The week before last, 2,000 videos were returned to the party's Westminster headquarters in a single day. Sackloads arrived by the hour, either because the addresses no longer exist, or with abusive messages from ungrateful recipients.

As the mail men sweated, the flood of videos spilt out of the mailroom into the corridors. "Cripes," thought party officials, "what if fierce, super-efficient Sir James Goldsmith sees this?" So they called a crisis meeting with Royal Mail and the mailshot company in Bedford. It was agreed that the Royal Mail would forward all returned videos to the Bedford company, where they now sit in a warehouse.

"The Referendum Party has advised us not to discuss sensitive political matters," says the mailshot company, BTB Mailflight.

Bernard Shrimley, the Referendum Party's chief press officer, was more forthcoming. "When you consider that well over a million videos have been sent out so far, the returns have been infinitesimal," he says confidently. "We will be redistributing the returned videos." And so the cycle begins again.



"I want to report a suspicious package"

With fears of a hosepipe ban once again making news, grounds-men at Aintree are working overtime to get the course ready for Saturday's Grand National. In the 48 hours before the race, the parched course will be saturated with more than 200,000 gallons of water.

Money talks

LITERARY talk is that Louis de Bernières, author of the tremendous *Captain Correlli's Mandolin*, has been approached by Transworld Publishing for a two-book deal worth £350,000.

He may yet judge the whopping £300,000 achieved by Martin Amis last year. Decidedly reluctant with the facts, but unable to deny the gossip, de Bernières says: "My agent will kill me. I have had plenty of lunches recently. Transworld is just one of many... you will just have to wait and see."

A'leaping

FROM his comfortable billet in the lush South African suburb of Constantia, Earl Spencer has taken matters in hand at Althorp, his family's Northamptonshire home.



He has ordered estate agents to sell five more ancestral titles to raise money to restore the house where he (and Diana, Princess of Wales) grew up.

When faced with a £200,000 plumbing bill last summer, Spencer simply sold five titles, including the lordship of Wimbledon — which sold for £171,000 on its own, boosted by contrived speculation about Boris Becker's interest.

This time round, Spencer is offering the lordships of Wandsworth, Battersea and others, including that of Lower Boddington. As he said last time: "Frankly there are so many of these titles that I'm not going to miss the ones that go."

All traces of Labour's gnarled old image were expunged from the

manifesto released yesterday. For one illustration, designers had planned to use a picture of an early couple buying apples at their local market. Shadow advisers vetoed the picture and replaced it with Mr and Mrs Middle-Class picking at shelves in a gleaming supermarket — which is where new Labour voters shop.

Bonkers

THANKS for the latest supermarket bonkbuster go to Sofia Gakkal, the lay organisation of Nichiren Dharma's Buddhism.

Julia Stephenson, aged 32, the daughter of a Surrey-based furniture tycoon and a former girlfriend of Dame Barbara Cartland's grandson, Viscount Lewis-ham, claims that it was the Buddhist group that inspired her to write *Pandora's Diamond*, a book about one middle-class woman's escape into the Eurotrash and carciofo mushroom set.

"Desperation, and the fear of an entry in *The Guinness Book of Records* as the oldest virgin in history," the book promises, lead Pandora "to feng shui, an ancient science which enables her to take control of her destiny." Lord Lewisham will make an ap-



Julia Stephenson

pearance in the book, but Miss Stephenson, like her heroine, is no lingering romantic. "I've written much more about his house than about him. It's so much more interesting."

P-H-S

20/04/97



LABOUR'S DAY

A summary of the new: an opportunity for more

It is tempting for journalists to say that Labour's manifesto, published yesterday, contained "nothing new". Unlike the Tories' offering, there were only a few, minor policies that had not been trailed and published in advance. Nowhere in its 40 pages of small print do the words "socialist" or "socialism" appear — but then that was an absence that we have all been long schooled to expect.

Yet, there is danger of observing the tenets of daily journalism and missing the march of political history. Unlike the Conservatives, Labour does not need to add gleaming new nuggets of policy in a bid to recover support. What Labour did yesterday was to produce a manifesto which fully represented the changes that the party has already made to itself.

The party's last remaining nationalising commitment, to restore the railways to public ownership, has been quietly dropped between the draft manifesto last year and now. Its long-held belief in taxing the rich more heavily has been replaced by a promise not to increase the top rate of income tax. The transformation is not total. Labour is still agreeing to meet union demands for recognition at the workplace, signing the social chapter and introducing a minimum wage. These policies now look rather rusty next to the shiny new vision for the rest of society. But even these are a powerful dilution of the promises that John Smith made to his paymasters.

The most welcome conversion is to the understanding that public spending is not the solution to all problems. In the past, even as recently as 1992, Labour believed that poverty could be alleviated simply by raising the level of social security benefits by a few pounds a week. Now the party accepts that gaining work and financial independence is a far better route out of deprivation than depending on the State. In education, too, Tony Blair now admits that much can be done to improve standards without spend-

ing money: grading pupils in sets by subject instead of teaching classes of mixed ability would, for example, improve levels of achievement at both ends of the spectrum.

Mr Blair made much yesterday of the question of trust. Labour suffers doubly from this problem. Because of its past record in government, there is a reluctance to trust it with power. And because of the Tories' recent record in government, there is a reluctance to trust any party's promises. Hence the modesty of Labour's election pledges and Mr Blair's "guiding rule" — "not to promise what we cannot deliver; and to deliver what we promise."

If Mr Blair wins, and he does achieve what he promises to achieve — mainly small-scale, incremental reforms — then he must calculate that he will be able to put to rest some of the public's suspicions about Labour in particular and about politicians in general. This manifesto, therefore, is very much one aimed at securing a second term.

There is a danger that, in its very tentativeness, it will make life harder for Mr Blair should he win power. The manifesto contains promises of no fewer than ten "reviews", two "consultations" and two "corrections". It is all very well to be told that Labour plans to review pensions, or child benefit for 16 to 18-year-olds, or vehicle excise duty (voters, please note) but it goes only halfway. The electorate has a right to choose between two different reforms of pensions, not between one detailed proposal and the prospect of a review under another party.

It is understandable that Mr Blair should be cautious about putting down concrete proposals which will create some financial losers. But he is far ahead in the polls: he ought to feel safe in taking that risk. If he ducks it today, he can expect far more difficulty if and when he needs to take unpopular decisions in government. Now is the time for him to look to his mandate as well as his victory.

CHAMPION OF EMU

Chancellor Kohl goes on and on towards monetary union

The decision by Helmut Kohl to stand again as Chancellor of Germany closes off one of the easiest, if least plausible, escape routes for British policy towards Europe — the possibility that Germany would simply lose interest in creating a single currency and a federal Europe. So identified has Herr Kohl become with the push for economic and monetary union that many opponents of the enterprise believe that it is only his political dominance in Germany that is keeping EMU alive.

In truth, his decision to stand again is more personal and more parochial. Having already held office for longer than any postwar German leader, he is now preoccupied with ensuring that his achievements do not unravel. He wants his place in history to end on a note of triumph. For him, that means the successful conclusion of the policies to which he has devoted himself so single-mindedly: European integration, the anchoring of Germany in Europe, preventing the mark from being seen by neighbours as an instrument of German domination and extending the zone of Western security beyond Germany's borders.

Herr Kohl also wants another term for his Christian Democratic-led coalition. This, he believes, can be ensured only if he is there to lead it. The likelihood, fuelled by rumours of family entreaties for him to retire, is that he would leave office halfway through his next term. This would enable him to install his nominee as successor — most probably Wolfgang Schäuble, the sharp-minded, and hard-working but wheelchair-bound CDU parliamentary leader.

The Chancellor has just received a renewed pledge of loyalty from Theo Waigel, the Finance Minister and leader of the

Bavarian sister party, the CSU. He has quelled a potential tax revolt among his disaffected Free Democrat coalition partners. He appears fit despite earlier rumours of health worries. And his domination of his party and his country is unquestioned.

Nevertheless, he faces serious political risks. With more than four million unemployed, growing industrial militancy, worries about German competitiveness and the chasm still between east and west Germany, the mood is turning against Herr Kohl. Many Germans have still not realised that their welfare system has become unaffordable and that annual improvements in living standards may be a thing of the past. They do not understand why Herr Kohl is quietly attempting to make the CDU more like a cost-cutting, free-market conservative party and less a vehicle of the "social dimension" that brought it working-class support.

Herr Kohl may reckon that the opposition Social Democrats still show no grasp of changed realities nor ability to pick a leader with the nerve and ruthlessness to challenge the Chancellor. But that may not insulate the CDU coalition from voter weariness with the same Government year after year. Neither does it guarantee that the electorate will continue to support a policy as unpopular as monetary union just because the Chancellor has made it his own.

When Herr Kohl made his birthday announcement he had no thought for the British elections and the problems of our parties in agreeing a policy on Europe and the single currency. But the single currency will also be central to Germany's elections next year. His greatest ambition may yet prove to be Herr Kohl's undoing.

IN THE BLOOD

Some families will be fortunate in the next Parliament

Hereditary peers may be an endangered species if Labour is elected. The hereditary Member of Parliament stands ready and willing to take their place. Earlier this week we reported on the candidacies of Anne and John Cryer, widow and son of Barry, the late MP for Bradford South. Today, we note the campaigns of Elizabeth Peacock and her son Jonathan, who are fighting adjacent constituencies in Yorkshire.

It is almost impossible for both pairings to succeed and rather difficult for just one. Labour's majority must reach 101 to elect the Cryers. A Tory majority of 127 would be required to endorse both Peacocks. A hung Parliament would be enough to dispose of both of them. But other family connections are likely to be more fortunate. There are no fewer than 14 examples of candidates closely related to other candidates in this election.

The Bottomleys and Wintertons were the only married couples in the Parliament just ended. There is every chance that there will be three others if Margaret Ewing, Alan Keen, and Rhodri Morgan are all joined by their partners. A Labour majority would see Ann Keen enter the House not just with her husband but her sister, Sylvia Heal, as well. Fergus Ewing currently has a wife in Westminster and his mother, Winnie, in the European Parliament. The Eagle sisters — Labour's Angela and Maria — seem certain to serve together.

Parliamentary dynasties are not unusual, of course. The Astors, Cavendishes, Chamberlains, Cranbournes, Churchills, and Lloyd Georges have dominated British politics in this century. This contest will be the first for nine decades in which the electors of Southend West will not be offered a member of the Channon clan. In the past, though, son succeeding father was usually the order of the day. Married couples, and sisters, were extremely unusual. The combination of relationships available this time has never been matched before.

A greater mystery is why these special sets of families feel the compulsion to enter politics in the first place. Almost all careers end in some sort of failure and with precious little public gratitude for the trouble. What special feature of DNA produces the irresistible urge to kiss babies, wear ridiculous roses and stand upon soapboxes?

It is hard to imagine how their lives can preserve the slightest trace of normality. The week must be a ceaseless whirl between chamber, committee and constituency. The culture of Westminster normally destroys marriages: it hardly seems the ideal place to conduct one. Most MPs complain that they scarcely have the time to see their children. Perhaps the Cryers and Peacocks have got it right after all. The only way to avoid the problem of never being at home is for the family all to sit in the House together.

Race as an issue in current campaign

From Bishop Joe Aldred and others

Sir, Judging from recent articles in the press by Nicholas Budgen, the Conservative MP for Wolverhampton South West — eg, "We ignore immigration at our peril", *The Times*, March 18 — it seems that he and some of his colleagues are determined to raise this as an issue in the general election campaign. As leaders within the Christian communities of the West Midlands, we consider such action to be unacceptable.

Issues of race are real in the daily experience of many of those for whom we have spiritual responsibility or social concern. The rising number of reported and unreported racial attacks and the very considerable gap in the unemployment rate between black and white communities are two of many instances of a considerable problem.

All the main political parties are signatories to the *Principles of Good Practice and Conduct for Political Campaigners*, published recently by the Commission for Racial Equality. In this they undertake "to ensure that in any dealing with the public, no words or actions are used which may stir up racial hatred or lead to racial prejudice".

We urge all those involved in the current campaign to adhere to those guidelines.

Yours sincerely,
JOE ALDRED,
Director,
Black and White Christian Partnership,
†MICHAEL BOURKE,
Bishop of Wolverhampton,
†MAURICE COUVE de
MURVILLE,
Roman Catholic Archbishop of Birmingham,
CHRISTINA LE MOIGNAN,
Free Church Minister, Birmingham,
†MARK SANTER,
Bishop of Birmingham,
West Midlands Region
Churches Forum,
Carrs Lane Church Centre,
Birmingham B4 7SX,
April 2.

Election 97

From Mr R. M. Matheson

Sir, The Shadow Chancellor Gordon Brown makes a great deal of the "22 Tory tax increases" (report, April 3), about which he clearly feels strongly. If Labour wins the election can we therefore look forward to 22 tax cuts?

Yours faithfully,
R. M. MATHESON,
Well Manor,
Well, Hook, Hampshire,
April 3.

From Mrs Elizabeth J. Swift

Sir, I would be interested to know which 748 organisations Reed Personnel Services surveyed to reach the conclusion that "a huge majority of UK businesses" feel it would make no difference or they would be more successful if the Government changed (report, *Business*, March 24). As the owner of a small business I am very much concerned at the prospect of a Labour victory and have yet to speak to anyone from a small company who is not. A minimum wage, along with shorter hours, will no doubt be a lot of us off.

Being able to remember the last Labour Government, I will not be swayed by the silent tactics of Prescott, Cook, Beckett, etc, and will know that the predicted 3 per cent growth and continuing fall of unemployment will be thanks to my company, my contemporaries and the Conservative Government.

Yours faithfully,
E. SWIFT (partner),
Langwith Metal Finishers,
Rawreth Industrial Estate,
Rawreth Lane, Rayleigh, Essex,
April 1.

From Mr Ronald Forrest

Sir, Lord Rees-Mogg's article, March 24, writes that Tony Blair is resented by many Scottish Labour supporters as an Englishman with a fancy accent who has hijacked their party.

That, in my opinion, seems to be even truer of the feelings of many Welsh Labour supporters, who believe that they are being offered an assembly as an afterthought simply because the London leadership promised a parliament to Scotland. By denying the proposed Welsh assembly any real powers, the Labour Party creates the impression that it discriminates against Wales. At the same time the large English element in Wales has been antagonised.

The outcome of the general election in Wales may well contain some surprises.

Yours faithfully,
RONALD FORREST,
Delfryn,
Castle Morris,
Nr Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire,
March 24.

From Mr Michael Lockett

Sir, The Reverend John Wynburne (letter, March 28) hopes that Mr Tim Smith's gifts will be "amply and creatively used" in the future. Which gifts has he in mind?

Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL LOCKETT,
Horspond House,
Millway Lane, Palgrave, Suffolk,
March 28.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

End of an era for railway network

From Mr Mark Woolley

Sir, You are fully justified in looking forward with optimism to the new era of a privately owned railway network (leading article, April 1). There can be little doubt that the frequent shifts in policy and restrictions in funding by successive governments over the past 50 years served only to stifle the nationalised railway of the investment it deserved.

It is now becoming increasingly obvious that many towns which lost their railways during this period and have since expanded significantly would now be well placed to profitably support a rail service. Unfortunately, due to piecemeal redevelopment of former railway property, there is little likelihood of these routes ever being reopened, and many now sizeable communities have lost an important transport link forever.

Let us hope that through a combination of imaginative, newly formed railway operators and more enlightened planning policies by local authorities we will eventually see at least some areas regaining their lost railways, as has been the case in the Isle of Purbeck.

Yours faithfully,
MARK WOOLLEY,
(Secretary,
The Southern Steam Trust),
Station House, Swanage, Dorset,
April 1.

From Mr Barry S. Doe

Sir, When I left teaching in 1983 to become a public transport consultant I did so in the belief that our corporate, national rail system had a great future. I never joined British Rail but would have been proud to do so, for I found myself working with excellent managers — young people with good degrees from top universities who had given their life to BR in a belief similar to my own.

Patients' rights

From Dr John Harding Price

Sir, The recent judgment by Mr Justice Wall that a 16-year-old anorectic patient could be detained in a clinic against her will in order to undergo feeding treatment (report, March 13; letter, March 22) has wide implications for patients.

The severity of anorexia nervosa is best understood as an illness where the patient's unconscious needs are such that she (male sufferers are rare) seeks to destroy herself because she cannot see any personality role in the future. It is a treatable disease and the patients make an excellent recovery.

However, the judgment raises the question about all the other illnesses where the mind has a direct effect on the body system or conversely the diseases have a direct effect on the mind, limiting its function.

The classical examples of these are alcoholism (excluded in the 1983 Act as a separate entity) and drug addiction. Here the patient, unable to have a constructive life, descends into an area of gutter care, which is a danger not just for himself but for the whole of society.

Not so pacific

From Mr Erik Lundberg

Sir, I find it sad that recent publicity for Papua New Guinea (reports and leading article, "Not so pacific", March 27) should be as a result of its internal struggles. Despite a formidable range of natural disasters in recent years and a devaluation in 1994, it is only eight years since the World Bank applauded Papua New Guinea for its keen fiscal management and pursuit of financial independence, substantially boosting investor confidence.

Your leading article mentioned some of the logistical barriers to effective communication within Papua New Guinea. These have frequently added to the workload of those involved in development or peacekeeping. Many are still suspicious of the involvement of any other than those belonging to their own clan or tribe.

Yet, once convinced of honourable motive, these people are curiously dedicated. They are gifted with welcoming, humble hearts, glad to work for those things which lead to genuine progress. They possess a unique innocence, a reflection of the untainted topography that adorns their most splendid island. It is this very innocence that makes them vulnerable to those with a dual agenda.

In my humble opinion, Sir Julius Chan is one of Papua New Guinea's greatest statesmen, whose many initiatives have helped to steer the nation to a position of substantial economic and political potential. For him a military option to the Bougainville situation would have been a last resort and one that I am sure he would have justified on the basis of nine years of failed negotiation.

I believe that those few at the core of the current rebellion have rejected the person who advocates the only recent hope of a peaceful resolution.

Yours faithfully,
E. LUNDBERG,
(Aide to Sir Julius Chan, 1992-93),
35 Tuscany Gardens,
Northgate, Crawley, West Sussex,
March 30.

Updated oath

From Mr T. G. Nash

Sir, Jeremy Laurance reports today that the British Medical Association has produced a modern version of the Hippocratic oath.

Surely it is hypocrisy to attribute the oath to Hippocrates, who must be turning in his grave. If the medical profession wishes to practise to a different set of moral values than those that have stood the test of time, I suggest it would be better to use the name of the present president or secretary of the BMA. I do not feel the latest version will give patients the same confidence in their attendants.

Yours faithfully,
T. G. NASH,
Westlands, 36 Collington Avenue,
Bexhill-on-Sea, East Sussex,
March 28.

Letters for publication should carry contact telephone numbers. We regret that we cannot accept letters by telephone but they may be sent by fax to 0171-782 5046.

Public theatre and private pockets

From the Artistic Director of the Norwich Playhouse

Sir, I was outraged by the suggestion in today's third leading article ("The loo's the thing") that Sir Alan Ayckbourn should put yet more of his own money into his Scarborough theatre. As you yourself make clear, Sir Alan has already given generously from his own pocket to provide his fellow citizens with a theatre. But nobody suggests that firemen should pay for us to enjoy a fire service, or that librarians should pay for libraries. Sports facilities are provided by the public purse, and museums seek no financial contribution from historians.

To suggest, as your leader does, that the closure of the Stephen Joseph Theatre would have been "a humiliation for the theatre that was... opened with civic pomp only a year ago" has struck a somewhat melancholy chord here in Norwich, where the Playhouse was opened only 15 months ago, with the help of a lottery grant but no money from the local councils or from the regional arts board.

Despite personal assurances to me by an official of the Arts Council that the Playhouse, once opened, would be "an irresistible case for funding", it has struggled to operate as a producing theatre without any revenue grant whatsoever, and is now having to close before it has had the chance to build up an audience. The humiliation, if there is any, should not be laid at the door of the theatre, but belongs to those who do not support it. In Norwich, they do not even keep the public loos open either.

Producing theatres cannot exist without funding support from central and local government. It is surely not unreasonable to expect those who raise taxes and rates to use them generously in the cause of giving their citizens access to the most social of the arts.

Yours faithfully,
HENRY BURKE,
Artistic Director,
Norwich Playhouse,
Gun Wharf, 42-58 St Georges Street,
Norwich, Norfolk,
April 3.

The evolving eye

From Mr Clifford Wale

Sir, Mr Julian Wragg (letter, March 27) admonishes Nigel Hawkes and defends Richard Dawkins' account of the evolution of the eye. In fact Dawkins' explanation depends entirely on a single mutation, which then produced "a single, mutated, heat/light sensitive cell".

Professor Michael J. Behe in his book *Darwin's Black Box* (Simon and Schuster, 1996) shows that such a mutation is a biochemical impossibility. Nigel Hawkes' comments seem remarkably mild.

Yours faithfully,
CLIFFORD WALE,
Wistaria House,
21 High Street,
Blunham, Bedfordshire,
March 27.

Soaking up science

From Dr Brian Hoyle

Sir, The vexing question is not "the apparent causal relationship between forgetting to take an umbrella and the likelihood of precipitation" (letter, April 1), but the apparent propensity of umbrellas to congregate in places where they are of least use.

In theory, I keep an umbrella in my office, in my car and at home. In practice, when it rains, I usually find that they have congregated in one of the two locations other than where I happen to be.

Yours faithfully,
BRIAN HOYLE,
80 Thornbury Wood,
Chandler's Ford, Hampshire,
April 1.

Silencing salesmen

From Professor Bob Spence

Sir, I sympathise with Alan Coren's receipt of intrusive telemarketers (March 26), and suggest a solution. When recently offered new windows I replied that, regrettably, my house had no windows. There followed a delicious silence while the appropriate response was frantically sought, and not found.

Offers of life insurance could similarly be repulsed by the revelation of one's profession (war correspondent?) or, in extreme cases, by the exaggerated report of one's untimely demise.

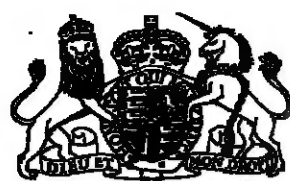
Yours,
ROBERT SPENCE,
1 Regents Close, Whyteleafe, Surrey,
April 1.

London Aquarium

From Mr Michael Brown

Sir, Over 20 years of my working life were spent in London's County Hall. It is therefore gratifying to read your report (March 29) that its present owners have reinstated its former use as home to one of the biggest collections of sharks in the Western world.

Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL BROWN,
Marrick, 5 Hendon Close,
Highbridge, Somerset,
March 30.



COURT CIRCULAR

BUCKINGHAM PALACE
April 3: The Princess Royal today opened the World Small Animal Veterinary Association Congress at the International Convention Centre, Birmingham, and was received by Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of West Midlands (Mr Robert Taylor).

KENSINGTON PALACE
April 3: The Duchess of Gloucester, Patron, National Association

of Decorative and Fine Arts Societies (NADFAS) this afternoon attended the Young NADFAS Silver Jubilee Day at Hampton Court Palace, East Molesey, Surrey.

In the evening, Her Royal Highness attended a concert in aid of the English-Speaking Union's Music Fund at Drapers' Hall, Throgmorton Avenue, London EC2.

Today's royal engagements

The Duke of Edinburgh, as trustee, will attend a meeting of the council followed by luncheon at St George's House, Windsor Castle, at 10.30.

The Princess Royal will attend the International Festival of Youth Rugby Finals at Murrayfield at noon.

The Marine Society

The 225th Annual Court of The Marine Society will be held at 11.45 on Tuesday, May 20, 1997, at The Royal Pharmaceutical Society, Lambeth, when Admiral of the Fleet Sir Julian Oswald, GCB, will give the address.

Furniture Makers' Company

The following have been elected officers of the Furniture Makers' Company for the ensuing year:
Master, Mr C.E.F. Brett
Senior Warden, Mr C.T.A. Hammond
Junior Warden, Mr J.A. Jacobs.

Reception

English-Speaking Union
The Duchess of Gloucester attended a gala concert held last night at Drapers' Hall in aid of the English-Speaking Union Music Fund and to mark the centenary of the death of Johannes Brahms. Mrs Edward Norman-Butler, Chairman of the ESU's Cultural Affairs Committee, presided. Mr Robert Olsen, cello, and Mr Duncan Prescott, clarinet, ESU music scholars, with Ms Elizabeth Burley, piano, performed. Baroness Brigstocke, chairman of the union, Mrs Norman-Butler and Mrs Valerie Mitchell, director-general, received the guests at a reception held earlier.

Appointments

Mr David Logan has been appointed Ambassador to Turkey in succession to Sir Kieran Prendergast who has retired from the Diplomatic Service.
Mr Stephen Brown to be Ambassador to Korea in succession to Mr Tom Harris who is moving to a new appointment in the DIT.
Mr Malcolm Hillson to be High Commissioner to Vanuatu from May in succession to Mr Jim Daly who is moving to a new Diplomatic Service appointment.

Birthdays today

Mr Peter Attenborough, former Headmaster, Charterhouse, 59; Sir John Beith, diplomat, 83; Mr Den Dover, MP, 59; Mrs Margaret Dupont, tennis champion, 79; Dr Chris Pavey, chairman, Shell UK, 52; Brigadier Anne Field, former director, WRA, 81; Mr J.M. Fleming, former chairman, Vauxhall Motors, 67; Mr Trevor Griffiths, playwright, 62; Lord Inchy, 62; Earl Jellicoe, FRSE, 79; Mr Gregory Knight, MP, 48; Colonel Sir Boyce Knox, former Lord-Lieutenant of Ayrshire and Arran, 81; Mr Richard Mansell-

Jones, chairman, J. Bibby and Sons, 57; Professor David Melville, chief executive, Further Education Funding Council, 53; Mr Tim Newell, Governor, Grenford prison, 55; Mr Paul Parker, local, 53; Mr Barry Reardon, former director, general secretary, CPSE, 48; Mr Ian Robertson, director, National Army Museum, 54; Mr Dave Sexton, football manager, 67; Dame Catherine Tizard, former Governor-General of New Zealand, 66; Professor George Wedell, former director-general, World Health Organisation, 70; Mr Gordon Arran, 81; Mr Richard Mansell-

University news

Queen's Belfast

The university has won research funding of more than £2.6 million. The latest grants have come from a wide range of sources, including the Department of Economic Development's Industrial Research and Technology Unit, industry, charities and research councils.

The funding is for studies in the university's Faculties of Agriculture and Food Science, Economics and Social Sciences, Engineering, Law, Medicine and Science. The Institute of European Studies at Queen's and the university's Health and Health Care Research Unit have also benefited, as has its award-winning environmental research initiative, the Queen's Centre.

Queen's Belfast

package — more than £600,000 — has been awarded to the Faculty of Medicine for a range of projects, including research on asthma, leukaemia, arthritis and Alzheimer's Disease.

The other awards included the largest single grant — £219,750 from the European Community — which was awarded to Dr Alan Marshall of the Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering. The funding is for research on cellular access to broadband services and interactive television.

Professor Emeritus

The title of Professor Emeritus has been conferred on Dr David Harkness, Professor of Irish History from 1975 to 1996, and on Dr Gerard Stockman, Professor of Celtic from 1980 to 1996.



Serena Bradbeer of Sotheby's holding *The Music Lesson* by Gerard Terborch (c.1617-81), which is estimated to fetch between £600,000 and £800,000 at an auction on July 2. The painting, one of four important Dutch Old Masters in the sale, shows a music master supervising a young lady playing the lute. The works are being sold by the executors of the estate of the late Agnes Elizabeth Roach, whose father, Enrico Factorini, was a Yorkshire businessman who assembled a remarkable collection of Old Masters in the 1930s and 1940s

Frontier city unlocks its secrets

BY NORMAN HAMMOND
ARCHAEOLOGY
CORRESPONDENT

ARCHAEOLOGISTS in Carlisle have been given £300,000 of millennium funds to reopen Rome's gateway to the north. Standing at the western end of Hadrian's Wall, the Roman precursor of Carlisle commanded access into south-western Scotland, and protected Cumbria against barbarian incursions.

The project "will focus on Carlisle's unique frontier role, as well as developing themes from the massive archaeological database accumulated during excavations over the past quarter century", said Mike McCarthy, director of the city's archaeological unit. A prime target will be location of the Roman bridge which carried Hadrian's Wall across the River Eden.

A Roman fort lies adjacent to the medieval Carlisle Castle, and Mr McCarthy believes that the key to the Dark Ages in the region may also lie there. "Is this the location of the halls of Urien Rheged and his successors, Owain, Rhun, and others in the 6th and 7th centuries?" he asks. A major excavation with public viewing will try to find the answers.

Other features of the millennium development will include rebuilding of the city's Irish Gate, and a new gallery linking the Tullie House Museum with the castle. Schoolchildren, students and tourists will see "the cutting edge of discovery and archaeology in action", Mr McCarthy says.

£10m drive to healthier eating

BY ROBIN YOUNG

THE supermarkets are battling to improve the nation's eating habits, they claim. Co-op supermarkets have launched a £10 million drive to encourage customers to eat healthier foods with a monthly shopping list of recommended products on promotion.

Safeway seeks to help parents to wean children from crisps and chocolate bars by offering individually washed and brightly wrapped fruit, vegetables and dried fruit, suitable for snacks and lunchboxes. "This fruit and vegetable range produced with children in mind is a supermarket first and signifies our commitment to introduce the young to fruit and vegetables at an early stage," says Safeway's nutritionist, Moyra Howie.

Advertised promotions include:
Asda: Topside/silver-side with added baking fat 14.38 kg, beef rump steak 16.49 kg, premium cod fillet in crumb 12.95 for 600g, pre-packed salads 70p for 100/200g. Gate apples 49p lb, strawberries 99p for 400g.
Budegus: Leg of pork 16.67 lb, smoked haddock 12.95 lb, back rashers 14.99 for 250g, baking potatoes 1.89 for 5kg, mandarin oranges 1.69 for 1.5kg, Davidstow mature cheddar 22.99 lb.
Co-op (CWS): Skinless chicken

Shopping

fillets 2.99 for 425g, turkey thigh mince 1.49 for 454g, pork chops 1.79 kg, cod fillets 1.49 kg, French red apples 99p for 500g, spring greens 49p for 500g, pure orange juice 49p lb.
Debenhams: Frozen turkeys 69p lb, chickens 5.99 for 1.6/1.7 kg.
Harrods: Ostrich bilings 1.99 for 100g, lamb and beef drawers 2.29 for 100g, lamb chops 1.59 for 100g, artichoke tortoni 1.99 for 100g, spinach and tomato soufflé 1.79 each.
Iceland: Mince beef 1.27 for 1.36kg, quarter chicken breasts 1.99 for 900g, salmon fish cakes 99p for eight, sweet and sour chicken 99p for 340g, raspberries 1.99 for 454g.
Kwik Save: Birds Eye 1.59 for 275g, Allinson's wholemeal loaf 47p for 400g, Cadbury's Dairy Milk 73p for 200g, Flora Light 73p for 500g, Walls Vienna 1.29 for 600 ml.
Marks & Spencer: Chicken breast fillets 1.99 for ten, salmon on crabs 1.49, New Zealand lamb leg knuckle 1.59 kg, Orkney smoked salmon 1.39 for six slices, mini Melton Mowbray 1.29 for 300g, bread and butter pudding 1.49, strawberries 1.49 for 500g.
Morrisons: Pork chops from 1.39 lb, topside/silver-side 1.59 lb, back rashers 1.49 for 250g, baking potatoes 1.89 for 5kg, mandarin oranges 1.69 for 1.5kg, Davidstow mature cheddar 22.99 lb.
Co-op (CWS): Skinless chicken

juicing oranges 99p for 14, Safeway: Rump steak 1.49 kg, chicken breast fillets 1.66 for 1.19kg, Scottish salmon steaks 1.99 for four 570g, chicken and broccoli pasta bake 99p for 300g, wholemeal bread 70p for two 880g loaves, oranges 1.19 for 12, Iceland: Lettuce 49p each, Royal Gala apples 1.79 for two packs. Sainsbury's: Turkey steaks 1.29 for four 300g, leg of lamb 1.59 for 1.5kg, haddock 1.29 for 480g, lean lamb round 1.49 for 454g, wild mushroom soup 79p for 500ml, twinnap garlic bread 99p for 370g, croissants 99p for eight, Iceland: Lettuce 49p each, oranges 1.19 for 12, Gold Choice coffee 1.94 for 200g. Sainsbury's: Pork loin chops 1.59 kg, beef sausages 1.69 for 275g, roast whole chickens 1.37 kg, soft white baguettes 79p for six, onions 79p for 2kg, Gala apples 1.49 for 5kg, Gala apples 49p lb, mandarins 44p lb. Tesco: Boneless shoulder of pork 1.24 kg, pork chops 1.34 kg, beef forequarter 1.49 kg, lamb half leg 1.59 kg, whole salmon 1.57 lb, haddock fillet 1.09 lb, raw peeled tiger prawns 1.09 lb, iceberg lettuce 35p each, Cape Williams 25p lb, strawberries 99p for 454g, Golden Delicious 39p lb. Waitrose: Free range chickens 1.29 up to 2.3kg, British diced braising beef 1.29 for 500g, spiced pork sausages 1.35 for eight, French country ham 1.29 for 100g, baby new potatoes 1.09 lb, underpinners 75p lb, Bon Rouge pears 99p lb, rhubarb 79p for 450g, Somerset ripe Bri 1.29 for 250g, chocolate soft set ice-cream 1.49 for 2lt.

Anniversaries

BIRTHS: Grilling Gibbons, wood carver, 1648; Sir William Stiemens, inventor, Lanthé, Germany, 1823; Rémy de Gourmont, writer, Bazarcoches-en-Houtmes, France, 1858.
DEATHS: Robert III, King of Scotland 1390-1406; Dundonald Castle, Rothsay, 1406; John Napier, inventor of logarithms, Edinburgh, 1617; Maurice de Nassau, Prince of Orange, military leader, The Hague, 1625; Oliver Goldsmith, playwright, novelist and poet, London, 1744; Karl Benz, pioneer of the motorcar, Paris, 1929; André Michelin, motor tyre manufacturer, Paris, 1941; Gloria Swanson, actress, New York, 1983.
Francis Drake was knighted by Queen Elizabeth I on board The Golden Hind on his return from circumnavigating the world, 1581.
Martin Luther King, Nobel Peace laureate 1964, was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee, 1968.

Latest wills
Lord Margdale, Lord-Lieutenant of Wiltshire 1969-81, left estate valued at £4,443,625 net. He left his estate mostly to relatives.
Connie Ribeiro De Melo, of Grasmere, Cumbria, left estate valued at £2,133,995 net.
Graham Gardiner, of Poulton-le-Fylde, Lancashire, left estate valued at £1,994,079 net. He left £20,000 to the Royal Star and Garter Home for Disabled Sailors, Soldiers and Airmen, and £10,000 to Laurence Marshall Edwards, retired accountant, of Great Missenden, Buckinghamshire, left estate valued at £1,386,496 net.

PERSONAL COLUMN

BMDS: 0171 680 6880
PRIVATE: 0171 481 4000

TRADE: 0171 481 1982
FAX: 0171 481 9313

BIRTHS

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DEATHS

CHILDS - Peter Michael aged 72, died on March 31st 1997, after a long illness. He was the son of Mr and Mrs J. H. Childs, of 10, St. John's Road, London. He was married to Mrs J. H. Childs, nee Jones, and had two sons, John and David. He was a member of the Church of England. He was cremated on April 1st 1997 at Golders Green Crematorium, London. He was survived by his wife, Mrs J. H. Childs, and his two sons, John and David.

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OBITUARIES

U. ALEXIS JOHNSON

U. Alexis Johnson, United States diplomat, died on March 24 aged 88. He was born on October 17, 1908.

A mainstay of American diplomacy, U. Alexis Johnson worked through some of the most chilling days of the Cold War. His 40-year career in the Foreign Service brought him a close shave with death in Saigon, ambassadorships to Czechoslovakia, Thailand and Japan, and seats at some of this century's more important international negotiating tables.

A bureaucrat by instinct and temperament, he tended to regard himself as a mechanic of American foreign policy rather than its moulder, the reliable boiler-room engineer who kept the diplomatic ship ploughing through the waves, while his political superiors on the bridge charted the course.

Nevertheless, successive Presidents, particularly John Kennedy and Richard Nixon, relied upon the softly-spoken Johnson for assignments of considerable complexity. Yet, in the world beyond Foggy Bottom and the White House, only the most earnest students of American foreign policy were familiar with his name — and even they had to search hard among the footnotes to find a mention of his achievements.

As with most career diplomats, that was the way he preferred it to be. The press, which he described in mainly derogatory terms, he regarded as a pest and a nuisance. In the words of a colleague who knew him in Washington during Kennedy's presidency, he was "a dedicated, hard-working public servant, stubborn, cautious, tactful, a figure frequently seated behind the potted palm. Only grudgingly would he divulge even the time of day to an associate who lacked the requisite security classification".

Johnson's first name was Ural, after the mountain range, but he took to using simply the initial when he entered the US Foreign Service in 1935. A teacher suggested that it would "ring more impressively" along the corri-

dors of the State Department at Foggy Bottom.

Among his colleagues he was an anomaly. The Midwestern grandson of Swedish immigrants, he grew up in rural Kansas and in California, where the family later moved, and was educated locally and at Occidental College in Los Angeles where he read economics.

American diplomats in those elitist and isolationist days, tended to come from established East Coast families and Ivy League colleges, and at first Johnson's prospects looked bleak. He passed the Foreign Service entrance examination in 1932, but at a time of government cuts was offered no immediate job.

In 1935, to his relief, he was eventually posted to the US Embassy in Tokyo, and then served by turns in Korea, China, Korea once more and then Manchuria, where he was stranded on the day that the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. The following day he was placed under house arrest, then interned by the Japanese and not repatriated for eight months.

After the war, because of his fluent Japanese, he was sent back to the Far East as one of General MacArthur's staff. In 1951 he was a member of the US delegation to the Japanese peace treaty conference in San Francisco. For three frustrating years he led talks with the Chinese over disengaging US troops in Korea, and was rewarded by President Eisenhower in 1953 with his first ambassadorship to Prague.

His next Embassy, from 1958 to 1961, was Bangkok, a posting which gave him useful contacts among Thai mercenaries. These were the soldiers who, later in the 1960s, he was to deploy in the fighting in Laos, and which he so imaginatively described as "local forces" in order that they could be paid in American money in accordance with congressional requirements. (Congressional meddling in foreign affairs was one of his lifelong bugbears.)

Johnson returned to Washington in 1961 at a time when President Kennedy was filling his State Department with people to whom he owed



U. Alexis Johnson arriving as US Ambassador to Prague

campaign debts. Standing apart from such figures, Johnson as Deputy Under-Secretary of State ranked as the highest-ranking Foreign Service officer. Among other duties, he served as the department's go-between with the top levels of the CIA and the Pentagon, a function which made him party to a number of cloak-and-dagger operations, although he maintained to the end of his life that he knew nothing of such bizarre proposals as the plan to kill Castro with an exploding cigar.

By the age of 20, Agnes was a soloist with the Glasgow Orpheus Choir, founded by her mentor Sir Hugh

Robertson in 1910. Under Robertson's colourful and inspired leadership it built up a worldwide reputation. Because of his controversial views, he was known as the George Bernard Shaw of Scotland and was briefly banned by the BBC in 1942 because of his pacifism. Much later James Hunter, former head of television at BBC Scotland, was able to confirm the outstanding quality of the Orpheus Choir when he came upon a film, now in the national archive, of it performing in 1928.

The choir was a showcase for Duncan's rich contralto and impeccable musicianship. She was much in demand as a professional soloist. She was, however, to find her vocation as a choral conductor. After an apprenticeship leading local choirs in Glasgow, she decided in 1943 to form the Scottish Junior Singers. They started with 60 girls and music bought on credit.

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Kathleen Ferrier and Isobel Baillie were among the artists who praised the choir's purity of sound, clarity of diction and high standards of musicianship. Sir Hugh Robertson himself paid generous tribute to Agnes Duncan's skill as a conductor: "She knew the choral game upside down and never missed a move."

In 1967 Duncan was appointed MBE in recognition of her services to music. Although she retired from conducting, she continued to adjudicate at festivals and competitions. She served as honorary president of the annual Glasgow Music Festival and in 1992 was invited to St James's Palace to make a presentation to the Queen on behalf of the British Music Festivals Association. It was a fitting choice: she was the association's oldest member and by now had been a member of the festival movement for 80 years.

She said that a choral conductor required, apart from unerring musicianship, a strong personality, a sense of humour, an ability to impose discipline without regimentation and a love of people. Her pre-concert pep talks were inspirational and her advice was pithy: "Never sing louder than lovely," she would say.

She was predeceased by her husband Mathew Nisbet and is survived by her daughter.

DR ANTHONY HOPKINS

Dr Anthony Hopkins, director of the research unit of the Royal College of Physicians, died after a collapse on March 6 aged 59. He was born on October 15, 1937.

ALTHOUGH an eminent clinical neurologist, Anthony Hopkins went on to enjoy a second distinguished career as director of the research unit of the Royal College of Physicians in 1988. Here he made his most lasting contribution. Although academic colleagues might have looked askance at the unit which had neither laboratories, staff, an academic career structure, nor patients under its care, Hopkins believed that he could attack the perennial problem that much medical research is not put into practice.

His approach was groundbreaking. He involved colleagues around the country and worked with their professional associations. He skilfully facilitated joint working between the different disciplines, bringing together doctors, nurses, therapists, managers and others in an attempt to overcome previous barriers to inter-professional collaboration. This was seen particularly in work on the healthcare of older people and patients who had suffered strokes. He pioneered the involvement of patients in defining and developing high-quality healthcare.

Born in Poole, Dorset, Anthony Philip Hopkins was educated at Sherborne. It was while he was there that his mother decided that he would be suited to medicine. He appears to have agreed and went on to study at Guy's Hospital Medical School. He proved an outstanding student, both academically and sartorially, and he qualified as a doctor in 1961.

He specialised in neurology at the National Hospital for Nervous Diseases, Queen's Square (1964-72). There was a year at the Mayo Foundation and, more significantly, a year at the Salpêtrière Hospital in Paris as a Medical Research Council exchange scholar. There, on St Valentine's Day, he met his future wife, who was then studying at the Sorbonne. They were married in 1965.

At an early age, he was appointed in 1972 a consultant neurologist at St Bartholomew's Hospital. He was elected to the fellowship of the Royal College of Physicians in 1976 and rose to become the physician in charge of the Department of Neurological Sciences from 1976 to 1988.

Two themes emerged early in his research which were later to put him far ahead of his time: he valued the views of patients on their illnesses and their healthcare; and, he saw the need for a broader approach to improving medical care. His foremost characteristics were his compassion, thoughtfulness and understanding. His flair for gardening, which had been apparent from early childhood, was

perhaps reflected in his skill for bringing on people. He could spot talent and was generous in his support, particularly when he detected a glint of enthusiasm and commitment. This stood him in good stead in his second career.

Unexpectedly, this began when he succeeded Sir Cyril Clarke as director of the research unit of the Royal College of Physicians in 1988. Here he made his most lasting contribution. Although academic colleagues might have looked askance at the unit which had neither laboratories, staff, an academic career structure, nor patients under its care, Hopkins believed that he could attack the perennial problem that much medical research is not put into practice.

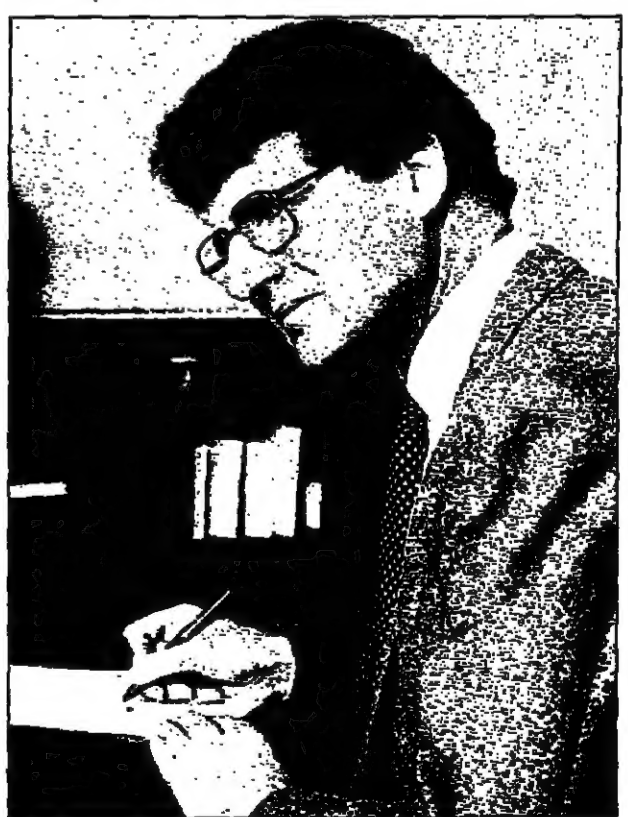
An enduring memory for many people will be a working lunch in his office overlooking Regent's Park or at his club — the Garrick. In such gatherings, he would tactfully, but incisively, cut through any waffle to get to the heart of the matter. He had a particular ability to link what clinical colleagues were saying to him about the health service with policy matters at a national level. This intellectual rigour was widely valued at the many key national committees of which he was a member.

Hopkins wrote prolifically. Among many influential texts are the reports and books of his unit on the quality of healthcare. He was particularly proud of his textbook, *Clinical neurology: a modern approach* (1993). He was keen on information technology but not for his writing — a computer was never seen on his leather-topped desk. Like many doctors, his handwriting was characteristic and his annotations of a manuscript would often wind right around the page — sometimes twice.

There was an important international dimension to Hopkins's work, also. He worked jointly with European and American professional organisations. He was in demand as an international speaker at conferences and had recently returned from Mauritius where he had been acting as a special adviser to the World Health Organisation.

However, he understood the balance between work and leisure. He loved the sea and bought a 35ft yacht, *Fluidity*. He also liked skiing, and practically every year his tall dark distinctive figure would be seen swooping down the slopes, but always making courteous way for any who crossed his path.

He leaves his widow, Elizabeth Ann Wood, and three sons.



AGNES DUNCAN

Agnes Duncan, MBE, choral conductor, died on March 23 aged 97. She was born on November 10, 1899.

AGNES DUNCAN was a choral conductor of high reputation who introduced generations of young people to music. Though her life and work were concentrated in the west of Scotland, she achieved wider fame through radio and television. She was also a leader of the music festivals movement which established itself throughout Britain. She was born in Alexandria

in the Vale of Leven, Dunbartonshire, a cradle of the Industrial Revolution, which also possessed a celebrated children's choir. She joined it at the age of ten by claiming to be 12 — the official entry age. Since the choirmaster knew this to be the age of her older sister, he asked if they were therefore twins. No, she replied; her sister was a few weeks older. So evident were her musical gifts that he smiled and let it pass.

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M.P. FOUND SHOT DEAD

MR EDWARD MARJORIBANKS

Mr Edward Marjoribanks, MP, for Eastbourne, who was 32 years of age, was found shot dead on Saturday night in the billiard room at the residence of his stepfather, Lord Hailsham, at Carter's Corner Place, Hailsham, Sussex, where he was spending the weekend.

Mr Marjoribanks was found by Lord Hailsham lying partly across a chair with a gunshot wound in his chest. Near the body was a double-barrelled sporting gun. Adjoining the billiard room is a small gun room, and marks on the floor and walls indicate that Mr. Marjoribanks was standing in the gun-room when the gun was fired. It is believed that he fell to the floor, but staggered or crawled through the open doorway into the billiard room and collapsed across the chair. Only one barrel of the gun had been discharged.

Mr John Slater, chairman of the Eastbourne Conservative Association, stated on Saturday night that he saw Mr. Marjoribanks on Thursday. He said: "He was very ill. He was in bed at his residence in Victoria-square, but he had a long chat to me about his work. He had been over-taxing his energies with his political and literary and legal

activities. He was working at great pressure on his life of Lord Carson. I was very worried about him, because he complained that he had not had a good night's sleep for many days. After I had seen him he came down to Hailsham for a rest."

An inquest will be held at 2.30 this afternoon at Lord Hailsham's house. The funeral will be at Hurstmonceux tomorrow morning, and there will be a service at Eastbourne at the same hour.

Sir John Simon paid the following tribute to Mr. Marjoribanks: "This sudden end to a career of so much brilliance and promise

ON THIS DAY

April 4, 1932

Edward Marjoribanks, MP, by his personality and his intellectual gifts, had already made his mark in public life and great things were predicted for him. The *East Sussex Corner* recorded a verdict of "suicide while not of sound mind".

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PERSONAL COLUMN

FLIGHTS DIRECTORY

FARESAVERS

MANAGIA	11/59	GREECE	8/23
MALACANT	5/59	TURKEY	1/59
MAJAL	5/59	ISRAEL	1/59
MAJAL	5/59	MAJAL	5/59
MAJAL	5/59	MAJAL	5/59
MAJAL	5/59	MAJAL	5/59
MAJAL	5/59	MAJAL	5/59
MAJAL	5/59	MAJAL	5/59
MAJAL	5/59	MAJAL	5/59
MAJAL	5/59	MAJAL	5/59

01476 592095

EMBASSY FLIGHT CENTRE

Algeria	1/59	U.S.A.	1/59
Algeria	1/59	U.S.A.	1/59
Algeria	1/59	U.S.A.	1/59
Algeria	1/59	U.S.A.	1/59
Algeria	1/59	U.S.A.	1/59
Algeria	1/59	U.S.A.	1/59
Algeria	1/59	U.S.A.	1/59
Algeria	1/59	U.S.A.	1/59
Algeria	1/59	U.S.A.	1/59
Algeria	1/59	U.S.A.	1/59

01273 700737

AIRLINK

Algeria	1/59	U.S.A.	1/59
Algeria	1/59	U.S.A.	1/59
Algeria	1/59	U.S.A.	1/59
Algeria	1/59	U.S.A.	1/59
Algeria	1/59	U.S.A.	1/59
Algeria	1/59	U.S.A.	1/59
Algeria	1/59	U.S.A.	1/59
Algeria	1/59	U.S.A.	1/59
Algeria	1/59	U.S.A.	1/59
Algeria	1/59	U.S.A.	1/59

0171-713-7770

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ANIMALS IN NEED

Animals in need of homes and care. Please contact the Animal Welfare League for more information.

0171-713-7770

LEGAL NOTICES

CHARITY COMMISSION

Notice is hereby given that the Charity Commission has received an application for the registration of the charity.

0171-713-7770

LEGAL NOTICES

THE SOLICITORS ACT 1964

Notice is hereby given that the Solicitors Act 1964 has been passed by the House of Commons.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHILDREN ON DIALYSIS

used holidays, so do their families. Before planning your own holidays this year, please spare more than a thought for those children who without your help will never get away at all. Donations urgently needed by The British Kidney Patient Association.

Bordon, Hants. GU35 9JZ.

Rep. Charity No. 27628

0171-713-7770

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

NEWS

Blair places his hopes on caution

Tony Blair set his sights on two terms of office as he offered Britain a fresh start and invited the country to judge his performance in government severely.

Labour would "blow its place in history" if it betrayed the trust of the British people at the general election and afterwards, he said when he unveiled the Labour Party's manifesto.

Labour backtracks on hunting

The Labour Party has backed away from its long-standing commitment to give parliamentary time to legislation banning fox-hunting. A compromise reached by party leaders means one of the countryside's oldest pursuits will be able to continue for some time to come.

Election 97, pages 7-15. Labour manifesto, pages 35-38

Motorway bombs

Two bombs were found under the M6 near Birmingham as the IRA brought chaos to the busiest section of road in Europe.

Road rage

A professor has concluded that incidents in which drivers attacked each other over traffic misdemeanours were more likely to involve the middle classes than any other violent crime.

Strike over gun boys

Teachers were considering industrial action after their school was ordered to take back two boys caught with an air pistol and ammunition.

Hate campaign

A mother of five was in jail after being convicted of waging a hate campaign against a former council official who made remarks about her family on a television programme.

£750m bank thief

Abbas Gokal, the shipping mogul convicted of stealing £750 million from customers of the Bank of Credit and Commerce International, spent the money on a lavish lifestyle.

Tunnel safety

Eurotunnel agreed to introduce new procedures including smoke-hoods for freight passengers, after admitting that there had been "delays" in tackling the Channel Tunnel fire.

On the trail of Shelley's passion

Devon hoteliers are locked in dispute over which inn played host to Percy Shelley and Harriet Westbrook on their honeymoon in 1812. Both the Rising Sun and Shelley's Cottage Hotel claim that the poet began his brief marriage to the 16-year-old Harriet in their rooms. Both, it appears, are wrong; Shelley honeymooned 600 miles away, in Edinburgh.

Fox hoax

A scheme to compensate hill farmers for lambs killed by foxes has been abandoned after hoax calls sent animal welfare workers driving thousands of miles to bogus addresses.

TV violence

Television shows such as *Blind Date* and *Gladiators* pander to a public desire for real, rather than fictional, sex and violence, said a criminologist.

Clinton cash crisis

Hundreds of pages of confidential White House documents reveal that President Clinton was so obsessed with the need to raise cash to campaign for re-election that he buried himself in the trivia of fundraising.

Arafat fund inquiry

Israel's transfer of almost £100 million in tax revenue to a secret bank account under the control of Yasser Arafat, is being investigated by the IMF.

Kohl fights on

Helmut Kohl, the German Chancellor, has announced that he intends to stand for re-election next year after months of speculation that he was suffering from failing health.

Medieval Russia

Pagan superstitions and medieval notions of justice still hold sway among many of Russia's peasants.



Tony Blair signs copies of the Labour manifesto for eager shoppers in a west London shopping centre yesterday. Page 1

SPORT

Modern scouts: British Aerospace and Lockheed Martin of America joined forces to compete for the \$5 billion contract for battlefield reconnaissance vehicles, described as the modern equivalent of the Cavalry's Indian scout.

Job losses: United Assurance is planning to shed 2,200 jobs, more than a third of its workforce, in the wake of its £1.4 billion merger with Refuge Assurance.

More leisure: Rank Group is to spend £1.5 billion over the next five years, creating around 7,500 jobs, as it builds up its British leisure interests.

Markets: The FT-SE 100 fell 22 to 4214.6. Sterling fell to 98.3 after falling from \$1.6447 to \$1.6415 and DM2.7475 to DM2.7387.

Racing: Master Oats, the 1995 Cheltenham Gold Cup winner, will run in the Grand National on Saturday, carrying the top weight of 11st 10lb, over a stone more than any other horse.

Football: Poland's draw against Italy has left England in control of their own destiny in attempting to qualify for the World Cup finals in France next year.

Tennis: Bristin's resurgence faces a stern test as a team denuded of its top players, Tim Henman and Greg Rusedski, takes on Zimbabwe in the Davis Cup.

Crickets: Tim Lamb, the chief executive of the England and Wales Cricket Board, hit back at criticisms by the editor of *Wisden* in the 1997 edition.

ARTS

Girls' stuff: Luscious Jackson are the sound of New York in all its cross-cultural glory. Caitlin Moran talks to the four girls in the band about being honest.

Boys' own: Supergrass are back, and giving the fans a bit of a slap around the face with a heavyweight new sound. With the jokers in the Britpop pack.

Street cred: Last summer 130 residents of a multiracial Birmingham housing estate were persuaded to perform *Macbeth* for a television documentary. How did they like it?

Big Ben: Ben Elton has come far as a dramatist since his *Gaspign* and *Poor Cow*, says Benedict Nightingale, who reviews his stimulating play, *Popcorn*.

FEATURES

Neighbours: How will the people who live in the same London street as the Labour leader Tony Blair and his family vote in the general election? Julian Kossoff tries to find out.

Valerie Grove: "There is a lot of snobbery in acting, and being called Rupert Graves doesn't hurt," says the star of *Hurlyburly* at the Old Vic.

EDUCATION

Saving fine schools: Labour must remember Diversity and Excellence and not be tempted to abolish the grant-maintained system, says Bob Balchin.

Coming champions: Daniel Rosenthal reports on an education pack for schools that could produce the next generation of British Oscar winners.

Why boys fail: Research suggests that the gender gap is widening because of the way reading skills are taught early on.

THE PAPERS

Despite President Yeltsin's announcement of a qualitatively different stage in the process of integrating Russia and Belarus, it is hard to summon up much enthusiasm for the "union" accord between the two countries that was signed on Wednesday.

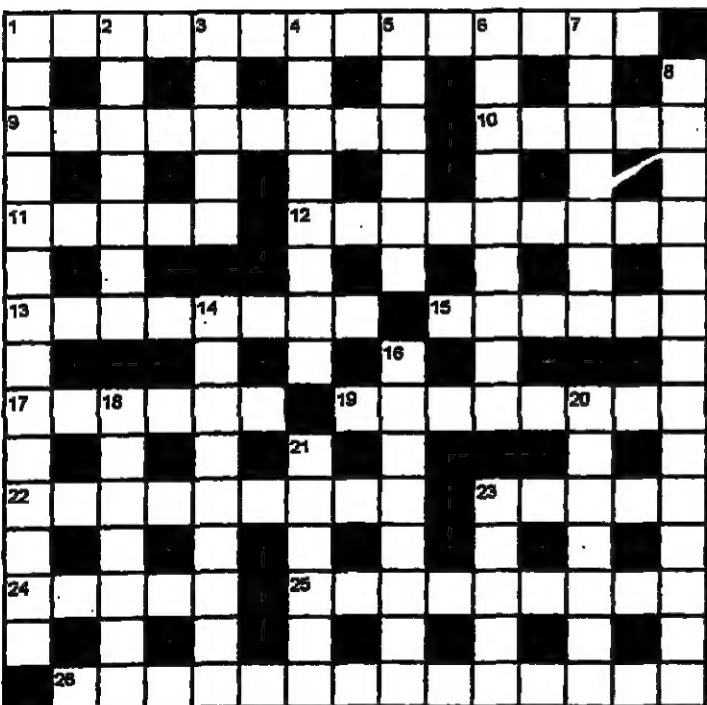
TOMORROW

IN THE TIMES

MAGAZINE
Peter Howson: the war artist who is trying to make peace after going through hell

WEEKEND
Business deals on the 19th hole are old hat. But now female wheeler dealers are teeing off

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 20,445



- ACROSS**
- Noble's song performed in church for some bishops (5,9).
 - Sort of sketch it hurts to put under the hammer (9).
 - Disturbance stopped early by copper, an unusual type (5).
 - It could be hard to trim (5).
 - Marsupial's surprised expression when caught by robber (9).
 - Steps taken to honour our star (3-5).
 - Lose courage, on the carpet (6).
 - Tool to get rid of what's frozen round front of vehicle (6).
 - Crustacean raw, without salt (8).
 - Do Russian reforms show organisations unable to adapt? (9).
 - Wipe the floor with flash young boxer, perhaps (3,2).
- DOWN**
- Agreed pronouncement on the radio (5).
 - Original type of popular star reaching high point (9).
 - Her lover was booked and taken to court (4,10).
 - Open a mobile cafe and embarrass one's friends? (3,3,4,4).
 - Suddenly attack with bullet to leg (5,2).
 - Poor bears rattled by intimidating person (5).
 - Contribute to defence that's thrown out again by recorder (8).
 - Drawing a line with this decision (6).
 - Direction artist follows, we hear, in general (9).
 - Whence number left on aeroplane? (7).
 - Port and non-alcoholic drink politicians linked in tax protest (6,3,5).
 - Inessential equipment for criminal's sidekick (9).
 - Composer adding note to sacred music - clear? (8).
 - House containing a new orchid (7).
 - Topical changes in American political situation (7).
 - Home erected in great European city (6).
 - E.g. Western manoeuvre to capture island (5).

Solution to Puzzle No 20,444

TARSUS BACKLASH
P U O E T
D I S E M B O W E L H O O T
R E D S L A I
R E A D J U S T A R R A C K
N L E E S E I L
G A U N T R E S O V A
M N R A D
S O N A T A U N G L O T H E
R N N C U A
M A R K C A N T E R B U R Y
T L E S T E
L A V E N D E R S E S A M E

Times Two Crossword, page 48

Labrador Road and Weather conditions

UK Weather - All regions 0336 444 910
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HIGHEST & LOWEST

Yesterday: Highest day temp Eastbourne, 15C
RSP: lowest day temp Lowest, 3C
GFF: highest rainfall Lowest, 0.47in
sunniest: Falmouth, Comstall, 10 hrs

FORECAST

General: most of England and Wales should be dry with bright or sunny spells, especially in the morning. Northern England will become cloudy during the morning, with some rain in the afternoon and evening. Any showers in eastern Scotland will soon die out. Thickening cloud will spread rain across Northern Ireland during the morning and all of Scotland in the afternoon. Over the higher ground of Scotland, there will be a period of sleet and snow, windy in places.

London, SE England, E Anglia, Central S England, Channel Isles: dry with bright or sunny spells, becoming cloudy in evening. Winds northwesterly, moderate, turning westerly later. Max 13C (55F).

E Midlands, W Midlands, SW England, S Wales, N Wales: mainly dry and bright, sunshine at first. Cloudy later. Winds northwesterly, light to moderate, swinging west to southwesterly. Max 12C (54F).

E England, NW England, Lake District, Isle of Man, Central N, NE England, Borders, Edinburgh & Dundee, Moray Firth: dry with bright or sunny spells at first. Becoming cloudy, rain in afternoon and evening. Winds west to northwesterly, light, swinging west to southwesterly, increasing to fresh. Max 9C (48F).

Outlook: cloud and rain in North, moving south.

AROUND BRITAIN YESTERDAY

24 hrs to 5 pm, b=brilliant; c=cloud; d=drizzle; dc=drizzle & sun; ds=drizzle & sun; g=gale; h=heat; m=main; sh=showers; s=sleet; ss=sleet & snow; s=sun; t=thunder

Area	Temp	Wind	Cloud	Max	Min
Aberdeen	10.4	018	8	46	h
Angus	7.3	005	10	50	h
Arundel	7.0	015	7	48	h
Ashford	5.4	004	9	46	h
Birmingham	4.2	001	11	52	h
Bournemouth	9.0	-	15	59	s
Bournemouth	7.8	-	13	56	s
Buxton	4.4	005	12	48	s
Cardiff	6.9	001	12	54	s
Carlisle	6.0	001	10	50	s
Caswell	5.4	001	11	52	s
Cornwall	7.1	001	10	50	s
Eastbourne	15.0	-	18	59	s
Edinburgh	8.2	019	7	46	h
Falmouth	7.5	-	13	56	s
Farnham	10.8	-	10	50	s
Gloucester	2.8	001	11	52	s
Glasgow	8.5	009	8	46	h
Guernsey	9.3	001	14	57	s
Hastings	6.6	008	9	46	h
Hawking	9.0	-	13	56	s
Hereford	8.7	-	12	54	s
Hemel Hempstead	8.1	001	11	52	s
Isle of Man	7.0	001	10	50	s
Leeds	10.0	-	14	57	s
Leicester	8.2	006	7	46	h
Liverpool	5.7	001	11	52	s
Luton	7.1	047	3	37	sh
Manchester	-	-	-	-	-
Marlow	-	-	-	-	-
Medford	-	-	-	-	-
Midland	-	-	-	-	-
Monmouth	-	-	-	-	-
Murdoch	-	-	-	-	-
Norwich	-	-	-	-	-
Nottingham	-	-	-	-	-
Oldham	-	-	-	-	-
Orkney	-	-	-	-	-
Perth	-	-	-	-	-
Portsmouth	-	-	-	-	-
Reading	-	-	-	-	-
Salisbury	-	-	-	-	-
Scarborough	-	-	-	-	-
Shrewsbury	-	-	-	-	-
Southport	-	-	-	-	-
Stamford	-	-	-	-	-
Stirling	-	-	-	-	-
Stroud	-	-	-	-	-
Sunderland	-	-	-	-	-
Sussex	-	-	-	-	-
Torquay	-	-	-	-	-
Truro	-	-	-	-	-
Warrington	-	-	-	-	-
Wexham	-	-	-	-	-
Widnes	-	-	-	-	-
Woking	-	-	-	-	-
Worcester	-	-	-	-	-
Wrexham	-	-	-	-	-

Temperatures at midday local time on Wednesday X - not available

FORECAST

Dundee, Moray Firth: dry with bright or sunny spells at first. Becoming cloudy, rain in afternoon and evening. Winds west to northwesterly, light, swinging west to southwesterly, fresh. Max 11C (52F).

Aberdeen, Orkney, Shetland: sunny spells and showers at first, becoming cloudy later with rain in evening. Winds northwesterly, fresh to strong, swinging southeasterly later. Max 10C (50F).

SW Scotland, Glasgow, Argyll, NW Scotland, N Ireland: dry at first, cloud thickening with outbreaks of rain spreading from west in morning. Winds light and variable, becoming southerly, fresh to strong, later southwesterly. Max 11C (52F).

Central Highlands, NE Scotland: dry with bright or sunny spells at first. Becoming cloudy with outbreaks of rain; sleet or snow on high ground. Winds west to northwesterly, light, swinging west to southwesterly, increasing to fresh. Max 9C (48F).

Outlook: cloud and rain in North, moving south.

AROUND BRITAIN YESTERDAY

24 hrs to 5 pm, b=brilliant; c=cloud; d=drizzle; dc=drizzle & sun; ds=drizzle & sun; g=gale; h=heat; m=main; sh=showers; s=sleet; ss=sleet & snow; s=sun; t=thunder

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Leicester	8.2	006	7	46	h
Liverpool	5.7	001	11	52	s
Luton	7.1	047	3	37	sh
Manchester	-	-	-	-	-
Marlow	-	-	-	-	-
Medford	-	-	-	-	-
Midland	-	-	-	-	-
Monmouth	-	-	-	-	-
Murdoch	-	-	-	-	-
Norwich	-	-	-	-	-
Nottingham	-	-	-	-	-
Oldham	-	-	-	-	-
Orkney	-	-	-	-	-
Perth	-	-	-	-	-
Portsmouth	-	-	-	-	-
Reading	-	-	-	-	-
Salisbury	-	-	-	-	-
Scarborough	-	-	-	-	-
Shrewsbury	-	-	-	-	-
Southport	-	-	-	-	-
Stamford	-	-	-	-	-
Stirling	-	-	-	-	-
Stroud	-	-	-	-	-
Sunderland	-	-	-	-	-
Sussex	-	-	-	-	-
Torquay	-	-	-	-	-
Truro	-	-	-	-	-
Warrington	-	-	-	-	-
Wexham	-	-	-	-	-
Widnes	-	-	-	-	-
Woking	-	-	-	-	-
Worcester	-	-	-	-	-
Wrexham	-	-	-	-	-

ABROAD

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